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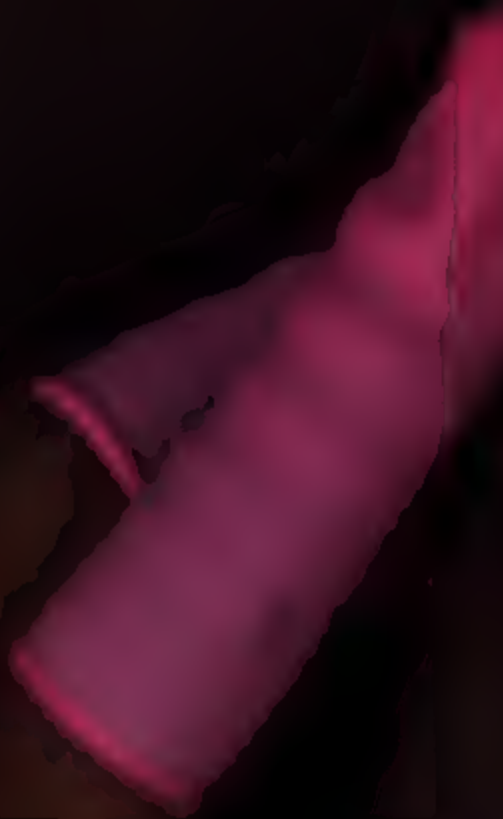
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**LIFE OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY.**



**LIFE OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY.**

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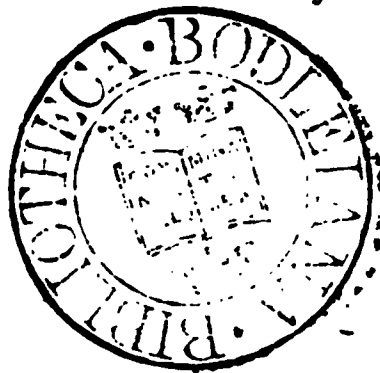
THE LIFE OF  
BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

*The Devotion to the Sacred Heart.*

BY THE REV. GEORGE TICKELL,

OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.



LONDON:

BURNS, OATES, AND COMPANY, 17, PORTMAN STREET,  
AND PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1869.

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TO THE

DAUGHTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF SALES,

THE ORDER OF THE

VISITATION OF HOLY MARY,

WHOSE LIVES REFLECT FROM THEIR INSTITUTE

THE VIRTUES

Of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

THIS LIFE

OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY,

THE DEPOSITARY OF THE TREASURE OF THE SACRED HEART,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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## NOTICE.

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THE following Life is based upon the Memoir of her own life written by Blessed Margaret Mary herself at the wish of her Director, Father Rolin, S.J., and on the Life written by the Religious of Paray-le-Monial, her contemporaries. The Life by Monsignor Languet is drawn from the same documents.

The Author desires to acknowledge the obligations he is under to the *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary* by Père Daniel, S.J., and his sense of the kind assistance he has received from the Religious of the Visitation of the Monastery of Westbury.

*St. Francis Xavier's, Liverpool.*  
*Feast of St. John Francis Regis, 1869.*





# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. 1647—1657. BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD OF MARGARET MARY . . . . .	I
CHAPTER II. 1657 — 1665. SICKNESS AND DOMESTIC PERSECUTION . . . . .	8
CHAPTER III. 1665 — 1668. TRIALS REGARDING HER VOCATION. HER FINAL RESOLUTION . . . . .	22
CHAPTER IV. 1668—1671. CHOICE OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION . . . . .	35
CHAPTER V. 1671. SHE ENTERS PARAY-LE-MONIAL, AND RECEIVES THE HABIT . . . . .	45
CHAPTER VI. 1671. ST. FRANCIS OF SALES AND THE SACRED HEART . . . . .	54
CHAPTER VII. 1671—1672. HER NOVICESHIP AND PRO- FESSION . . . . .	60
CHAPTER VIII. 1672. MARGARET MARY UNDER MOTHER DE SAUMAISE . . . . .	79
CHAPTER IX. 1672 — 1673. EXTRAORDINARY GRACES RECEIVED BY MARGARET MARY AFTER HER PRO- FESSION . . . . .	86
CHAPTER X. 1673. MARGARET MARY'S ACCOUNT OF THESE GRACES . . . . .	91
CHAPTER XI. 1674—1675. THEY ARE NOT AT VARIANCE WITH THE SPIRIT OF HER ORDER . . . . .	116
CHAPTER XII. 1674. FIRST SIGNAL REVELATION REGARD- ING THE SACRED HEART . . . . .	127
CHAPTER XIII. 1674—1675. FATHER DE LA COLOMBIERE AT PARAY. REVELATION TO MARGARET MARY RE- GARDING THE INSTITUTION OF THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART . . . . .	145
CHAPTER XIV. 1676—1677. FATHER DE LA COLOMBIERE IN ENGLAND . . . . .	155

	PAGE
CHAPTER XV. 1676—1678. MARGARET MARY A VICTIM TO THE SANCTITY OF DIVINE JUSTICE . . . . .	171
CHAPTER XVI. 1678. REMINISCENCES OF MARGARET MARY BY MOTHER DE SAUMAISE . . . . .	188
CHAPTER XVII. 1677—1678. RELIGIOUS STATE OF THE COMMUNITY OF PARAY . . . . .	192
CHAPTER XVIII. 1678—1679. MARGARET MARY UNDER MOTHER GREYFIE . . . . .	200
CHAPTER XIX. 1679. INTERIOR TRIALS . . . . .	208
CHAPTER XX. 1678—1681. MOTHER GREYFIE'S MEMOIRS	214
CHAPTER XXI. 1681—1682. FATHER DE LA COLOMBIERE'S RETURN AND DEATH AT PARAY . . . . .	229
CHAPTER XXII. 1682—1684. TRIALS AND COUNSELS BY MOTHER GREYFIE . . . . .	238
CHAPTER XXIII. 1684—1686. MARGARET MARY UNDER MOTHER MELIN. SHE IS APPOINTED MISTRESS OF NOVICES . . . . .	253
CHAPTER XXIV. 1686—1688. VOCATION OF A POSTULANT	273
CHAPTER XXV. 1678—1690. MARGARET MARY'S CORRES- PONDENCE WITH MONASTERIES OF HER OWN ORDER	289
CHAPTER XXVI. 1687—1690. HER INFLUENCE UPON HER FAMILY . . . . .	312
CHAPTER XXVII. 1687—1690. CONCLUDING YEARS AND DEATH OF MARGARET MARY . . . . .	320
CHAPTER XXVIII. 1690—1864. HISTORY OF THE RELICS OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY. SHE IS DECLARED VENERABLE. HER BEATIFICATION . . . . .	337
CHAPTER XXIX. 1697—1864. THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART . . . . .	348
APPENDIX. DECREE OF BEATIFICATION . . . . .	369

THE LIFE  
OF  
BLESSED MARGARET MARY.

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CHAPTER I.

1647—1657.

THE life of Blessed Margaret Mary is so identified with the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord, which she was chosen by Him to establish in the Church, that every incident in it borrows all its interest from its connection with that Devotion. The circumstances of her early life serve to show how singularly she was prevented by divine grace, and prepared from her infancy for the privileged mission which she was designed to fulfil.

Margaret was born on the 22nd of July, the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen, in the year 1647, at Terrau,\* a

\* There is some question regarding the exact birthplace of Blessed Margaret Mary. Both Monsignor Languet and Père Daniel, S.J., in his recent "Life," agree in fixing it at the village of Lauthecourt. The authority upon which they rest is that of M. Chrysostom Alacoque, brother to Blessed Margaret Mary, who, in his "Memoir" of her life, as well as in his deposition made in the process instituted by Bishop Languet in 1715, names Lauthecourt as her birthplace. The "Life," however, written by the contemporaries of Blessed Margaret Mary, and lately given to the world by the Religious of her own Monastery of Paray-le-

little village of Charolais, in the province of Burgundy, and the diocese of Autun, in France. Her father, M. Claude Alacoque, held a highly respectable position as judge of Terrau and of several of the neighbouring manors, a testimony to his acknowledged character for religion and integrity. His marriage with Philiberte Lamyn was blessed with a family of four sons and three daughters.\* Two daughters, Catherine and Gilberte,

Monial, names Terrau as her birthplace. We prefer this authority. For the facts there recorded, treasured up as they would have been with so jealous an interest, were learnt, there is every reason to believe, from the lips of Blessed Margaret Mary herself. The collection of the documents for this "Life" commenced in 1690, the year of her death, and the agreeable task of putting them into form was assigned to two of the Sisters who had been her own Novices, and in whose arms she had expired. Again, Chrysostom Alacoque was but two years older than his sister ; his knowledge, therefore, could only have rested upon hearsay. It was after an interval little short of seventy years that Chrysostom made his deposition, in 1715, and it was later still that he wrote his "Memoir." It is not difficult, then, to suppose that he might have been inaccurate on this point, especially as his memory has confessedly failed him in some other points connected with the life of Blessed Margaret Mary. It was, on the other hand, after a much briefer interval that her contemporaries would have received the facts from Blessed Margaret Mary. These arguments are confirmed by the fact that the father, M. Claude Alacoque, certainly resided at Terrau a few years after the date of the birth of Blessed Margaret Mary, as there are letters to him from friends of the family, preserved in the archives of the Monastery of Paray-le-Monial, and bearing the address, "A. M. Alacoque, Juge de Terrau, au Terrau." The village of Terrau had its castle, to which was attached a chapel, with a Chaplain, as appears from a public document of 1656. The Blessed Sacrament was kept here, and it was here that Blessed Margaret Mary gave those early and touching proofs of her love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and for the Blessed Eucharist.

\* The names of the seven children, in order of birth, are as follows : — (1.) John ; (2.) Claude Philibert ; (3.) Catherine ;

died young. The third, intermediate in point of age between the other two, was baptized three days after her birth, on the 25th of July, 1647, in the parish church of Vérosvres, and received the name of Margaret, after her godmother, Marguerite de Saint-Amour, lady of M. Claude de Fautrières-Corcheval, Lord of Vérosvres, who resided at the Castle of Corcheval.\*

We obtain some glimpse of the special graces with which her infancy was prevented, from the avowal which she herself makes in the account of her life written by herself in obedience to her director, Father Rolin, S.J. "O my only Love!" are her words, "how much am I indebted to Thee for having prevented me with Thy benedictions from my most tender years, making Thyself master and owner of my heart, though Thou knewest well the resistance which this ungrateful heart

(4.) Chrysostom ; (5.) MARGARET ; (6.) Gilberte ; (7.) James. Catherine and Gilberte died young. Claude Philibert followed the profession of the law, and died September 25, 1665. John had died in 1663, at the same age as his brother. Of the two surviving brothers, Chrysostom and James, the first embraced his father's profession—that of the law; the second, the ecclesiastical state. They both settled at Bois-Sainte-Marie, of which James was the Curé—Chrysostom, perpetual mayor. They both felt the happy influence of the example and exhortations of their sister. They embraced with ardour the Devotion of which she was the Apostle, and built, in 1690, at Bois-Sainte-Marie, a chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

\* One of the biographers of Blessed Margaret Mary represents Mde. de Fautrières as residing at the Castle of Terrau ; but it is certain, from title-deeds of ancient date, that the castle never belonged to this family. Their residence was at Corcheval, near Baubery. It had its own chapel, which is still standing, and the Blessed Sacrament was kept in it. It was easy then for Margaret to visit It at all hours, without alarming the vigilance of the persons in charge of her.



would make to Thee. No sooner did I come to know myself than Thou madest my soul to see the hatefulness of sin. This struck me with such a horror of it that the least blemish was an intolerable torment to me, so that in order to check the sallies of my childish vivacity, it was enough to tell me that they were displeasing to God ; this would stop me at once. I felt constantly urged to repeat, though I did not understand the meaning of the words, ‘My God, I consecrate to Thee my purity ; I vow to Thee perpetual chastity.’” She pronounced them one day between the two Elevations at Mass, which she was in the habit of hearing on her bare knees even in the coldest weather. “I did not understand,” she says, “what I had done, or the meaning either of the word ‘vow’ or ‘chastity.’” But our Lord, Who had Himself inspired her to make the offering, graciously accepted it, and began to lead her already to a love of solitude, that He might speak more unreservedly to her heart. “All my inclination,” she says, “was even at this time to go and bury myself in some solitude.” It was only a suggestion of heavenly prudence that restrained her. “I was kept back,” she says, “by the fear of meeting men.”

Our Lord had consigned her pure soul, as He afterwards assured her Himself, to the care of His Blessed Mother, whose Daughter she was one day to be, to be fashioned by her for the work of love for which He destined her ; and the Queen of Virgins gave her many proofs of her watchful care. “The Blessed Virgin,” she tells us, “always took charge of me. I had recourse to her in all my needs, and she rescued me from very great dangers.” She had all the confidence of a child

towards our Blessed Lady, and with child-like simplicity used her mediation in approaching her Divine Son. "I did not dare," she says, "to address her Divine Son, but I always addressed myself to her." She offered her the chaplet kneeling on her bare knees upon the ground, making a genuflection or kissing the ground at each *Ave Maria*. Nor did her loving Mistress fail to correct her future Daughter by a gentle rebuke if she happened at any time to be betrayed into any negligence in her service.

Madame de Fautrières, not content with confining her character of godmother merely to the name, expressed a wish to have little Margaret with her, in order to instruct her in her Christian duties in a manner suited to her tender years. The proposal was agreeable to her parents; and Margaret went accordingly, at the age of four years, to reside at Corcheval. Here she was enabled to gratify that ardent desire with which our Lord, Who had destined her to make known a Devotion intended to extend in souls the reign of His love, had already inspired her, of remaining constantly in His presence. As there was a chapel attached to the castle, it was easy for her to follow this attraction, and frequently to adore our Lord in the Sacrament of His love. It was here that, if wanted, she was always sought after. Here she was to be found kneeling before the altar, her hands joined in prayer. The prayer that she made was the expression of her love for the Blessed Sacrament. She hardly knew what she did there; she only felt a strong desire of consuming herself like a burning taper, as she expresses it, in His

presence, in order to make a return of love for love.

It was at this time that Margaret gave a striking proof of that supernatural instinct which guided the action of her pure soul. Of the two persons who were charged with the care of teaching her her prayers and catechism, one, as she relates herself, she avoided, whilst she gladly attended to the instructions of the other; though the former caressed her, and from the latter she often received some rebuffs. She understood that her instinct had withdrawn her from one whose character was a pernicious example, and had attracted her to the other, who was a good Christian.

She lost her father when she was but eight years of age; and as she was the only daughter, and her mother, Madame Alacoque, who had taken charge of the education of her five sons, was frequently from home, her education was left almost entirely to servants and the neighbouring villagers. She was placed, when eight years and a half old, at school with the Dames Urbanistes\* at Charolles; and to the period spent with these good Religious was limited the real education which Margaret received. They were not long in discovering the treasure which had been confided to their care. They observed such prudence and virtue in her conduct that they allowed her to make her first Communion when nine years old. From this moment she was so transported with love for our Lord that, in spite of her natural liveliness of disposition, He occu-

\* Such was the name given to the Religious of St. Clare who followed the mitigated rule sanctioned by Pope Urban VIII.

pieced all her thoughts. "After my first Communion," she says, "our Lord spread such bitterness over all my little enjoyments that I could find relish in none, though I sought them eagerly. But as soon as I thought to take part in them with my companions, I always felt something which called and drew me aside, and gave me no rest until I followed the attraction. Then the Spirit made me put myself in prayer, almost always prostrate on the ground, or kneeling on my bare knees, provided I was not seen; for it was a strange torment to me if any one found me thus employed." She felt a great desire to do as she saw the Religious do, though she wished for still greater retirement. "I had a great desire," she says, "to do all I saw the Religious do, for I looked upon them all as Saints, and I thought that if I were a Religious I should become like them. This inspired me with so great a desire that I sighed for nothing else, though I did not think them sufficiently retired for me; but, knowing no others, I thought that I ought to remain there." And yet it is a singular fact that there was a Monastery of the Visitation at Charolles; but for some reason, whether from the prejudices of her family, or from some other cause, Margaret never set foot within it. No human feeling was to have place in her attraction to the Daughters of Holy Mary; her vocation was to come unmistakably from God.

## CHAPTER II.

1657—1665.

IN order to gain yet more full possession of her heart, Almighty God visited Margaret with a severe illness, which confined her to her bed for four years. The bones pierced her skin, and she almost entirely lost the use of her limbs. Hence, at the end of two years, her mother was obliged to remove her from the Sisters, who would gladly have kept her always with them.

On her return from Charolles, Margaret went to Lauthecourt, where her mother was then residing. The violence of her malady was such as to defy the skill of the physicians. In this extremity the resolution was taken to have recourse to supernatural means, and she was vowed to the Blessed Virgin. "A promise was made," she says, "that if she cured me I should be one day one of her Daughters. I had no sooner made this vow than I was cured, and I experienced quite a fresh protection on the part of the Blessed Virgin, as if I belonged wholly to her." The Blessed Virgin now took charge of her as her Daughter, and trained her in the exercises of her spiritual life. "She made herself so entirely mistress of my heart," is Margaret's own account, "that she took upon herself the absolute government of me; she reproved me for my faults, and taught me to do the will of God. It happened that one day I was seated while saying my Rosary, when she presented herself before me and gave me the following rebuke,

which I have never forgotten, though at that time I was young: 'What! my Daughter, is it possible that you should be so negligent in my service?' These words left such an impression on my soul that they have served me all my life."

Some interesting notices regarding these early years of Blessed Margaret Mary have been preserved to us in the "Memoir" drawn up by her brother Chrysostom, who had so many opportunities of observing her closely. She would give, he tells us, two hours in the morning and two in the evening to prayer; so regulating her time, however, as not to be prevented by her spiritual exercises from conforming with charming modesty and alacrity to the wishes of her mother and her brothers. To this end she would rise before day-break and abridge her sleep at night, until her mother, informed by the domestics of the excessive austerities of her daughter, obliged her to sleep with her in her room. To this prayer and watching she joined fasting on three days in the week, and the wearing of an iron chain which she had constructed for the mortification of her body. She would deprive herself of her meals in order to give them to the poor, retaining only the coarsest food for herself. Her excessive austerities brought on an acute pain in her side, which she would have kept concealed had not a sudden fall forced from her an exclamation which betrayed her secret. She suffered also at the same time from a violent ulceration of her legs. Pressed by her mother to have recourse to medical advice, she assured her, as her brother relates, that our Lord who had sent her so light an affliction would cure her within a month; and she would join her

prayers, she said, with those of her mother to obtain the favour which would have the effect of removing her anxiety. No sooner had the Novena, which they made together, been concluded, than the wounds in her leg entirely disappeared, and she was perfectly cured of the pain in her side. She assured her mother also, in reply to her entreaties to moderate her austerities for her sake, that our Lord would give her sufficient strength to render her all the service in her power. And, in fact, during the rest of the time that she remained at home with her mother, she was free from all ailment, though she increased her mortifications which her mother now left her free to practise. It was upon her health being thus re-established that Margaret was placed, as we have seen above, under the care of the Dames Urbanistes of St. Clare at Charolles.

Margaret was naturally of a joyous and expansive character. She had a keen sense of affection and friendship, and she was even in some danger in consequence of losing her fervour. But Almighty God, who watched jealously over her heart, secured her against this danger by preparing for her a trial the severest that could be imagined for her pious and affectionate disposition. Madame Alacoque was induced to give the charge of the management of her property to several persons apparently hardly above the position of domestic who singularly abused her misplaced confidence, and so reduced both herself and her children to the condition of servants in her own house. Who these persons were and what was their exact position, Blessed Margaret Mary omits to mention in her narrative, and strives to exempt them from all blame, regarding them but

instruments employed by our Lord to carry out His loving designs in her regard. But what she must have suffered we may gather sufficiently from the details of her own recital. Let us hear her own account of this period of her life:—"Having recovered my health," she says (subsequently to her return from the Convent of Charolles), "I soon forgot my promise. I thought only of seeking my amusement and enjoying my liberty; I gave way to vanity and affection for creatures; the tenderness which my mother and brothers entertained for me seemed to authorise my giving myself fine times.\* But, O my God! Thou didst soon give me to understand that I was far out in my calculation, and that Thy designs were very different from mine. I did not give a thought then to what Thou hast made me know and experience since, that Thy Sacred Heart having given me birth on Calvary amidst such sorrows, the life which Thou hadst given me could be supported only by the Cross, and that this should be my most delightful food.

"The way, then, in which God arranged things was this: He permitted my mother to strip herself of her authority in her own house, and to resign it into the hands of others. The persons to whom she resigned it took such advantage of it that my mother and I were soon reduced to hard captivity. It is not my intention in what I am going to say to blame these persons;† I do

\* "A me donner du bon temps."

† Blessed Margaret Mary is so extremely reserved in her manner of speaking of these persons, that it is difficult to say exactly who they were. We can hardly suppose that they were mere servants. The household at Lauthecourt consisted at the time, as appears from old family papers, of Madame Alacoque, widow of M. Claude Alacoque, and grandmother to Margaret; Catherine Alacoque, her



not wish to think that they did wrong in making me suffer. Put away from me, O my God, any such thought. I regard them rather as instruments whom God made use of in order to accomplish His holy will. We had, then, no longer any power in the house, and we dared not do anything without permission. It was a state of continual war ; everything was kept under lock and key, so that I could not even dress myself in order to go to Holy Mass. I was obliged to borrow my cap and clothes. I acknowledge that I keenly felt this state of slavery. Matters went so far that I could no longer do anything, not even leave the house, without the permission of these persons. Reduced to this state, I felt drawn to seek my consolation in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. All my affections turned in that direction ; but as I was living in a village at some distance from the church I could not go there except with the permission of these three persons, and it often happened that when one gave her con-

daughter ; Madame Alacoque-Lamyn, her daughter-in-law, widow of M. Claude Alacoque and mother to Margaret ; and Madame Lamyn, the widowed mother of the last-named ; besides them were Margaret Mary and her younger brother, James. There were also married domestics who were employed in the service of the house, with their children. It is probable that these domestics, who were necessary for looking after the property of the family, composed principally of these poor widows, assumed an authority which the feebleness of the two aged widows, with the connivance perhaps of Catherine, enabled them to rivet more firmly every day. This view of the case, in keeping with the circumstances insinuated in Blessed Margaret Mary's Memoir, is confirmed by the deposition made by Sister Jane Mary Contois in 1715 :—" God had given the aforesaid Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque sufficient strength to bear patiently and without murmuring the ill-treatment of some of the family, which was carried so far that she was sometimes obliged to beg for bread at the neighbouring farmhouse."

sent the others refused. Often when I gave expression to my grief by my tears I was reproached with having made an appointment to meet some young man, and that I was annoyed at not being able to keep it, though I had such an abhorrence of anything of the kind that I would rather have been torn into a thousand pieces than have even thought of it. Not knowing then where to take refuge, I hid myself in a corner of the garden, or of the stable, or in some other retired spot, where I could place myself on my knees and pour out my heart in tears before God. I always did so through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, my good Mother, in whom I had placed all my confidence. I remained there whole days together, without eating or drinking, and sometimes poor persons of the village would give me a little milk or fruit towards evening. When I returned at length to the house, it was with such fear and trembling that I seemed as if I were a poor criminal going to receive sentence of condemnation. I should have esteemed myself happy to go and beg my bread rather than live in such constraint. No sooner had I entered the house than they began to find fault with me for not having taken charge of the household and the children ; and without having an opportunity of saying a word I was set to work with the servants. After this I passed the night, as I had passed the day, in shedding tears at the foot of my crucifix." It was here that our Lord explained to her the secret of those lessons in the school of suffering in which He was instructing her. " Jesus Christ gave me to understand in this state," she continues, " that He wished to make Himself the absolute Master of my heart ; that He wished to make my life wholly

conformable to His suffering life ; and that He would make Himself present to my soul, in order to teach me to act as He had acted Himself in what He had suffered for the love of me." It was from this source that she drew that love of suffering which gave a colour to her whole life. "From this time," she continues, "my soul continued so penetrated with the sufferings of our Divine Saviour, that I should have desired my pains never to cease for a minute." Our Divine Lord was constantly present to her in some stage of His Passion, and in the sight of Him all that she had to suffer became light to her, and she even regarded those who were the occasion of her suffering as the benefactors of her soul in procuring her a closer resemblance to Him. "My Jesus," she says, "was constantly present to me under the form either of the Crucifixion, or of the *Ecce Homo*, or as carrying His Cross. This sight impressed me with such compassion, love, and desire of suffering, that all my evils became light to me. Sometimes when they were on the point in the house of striking me I was sorry that the hands which were raised to strike me should have been withheld, and that they did not discharge all their anger on me. I felt constantly urged to render every kind of service to these persons, as to the true friends of my soul, and I would gladly have sacrificed myself for them. Nothing gave me greater pleasure than to render them a service, and to say all the good of them that I could. But, alas ! it was not I who did all this that I mention ; it was my Sovereign Master Who had taken possession of my will, and did not permit me to utter a single complaint or murmur, or to feel any resentment, or even to allow any one to bewail my lot or

express compassion for me, telling me that He had been treated so Himself, and that He wished that when any one spoke in my presence against those persons, and I could not hinder it, I should regard them as in the right and myself in the wrong, since my sins deserved much more."

At this part of her narrative, Blessed Margaret Mary expresses her extreme repugnance to continue; but she complies with the wish of our Lord. "Here," she says, "in the extreme violence which I had to do to myself in order to write of things which I had always kept concealed, and of which I had endeavoured not even to preserve the recollection, I made my complaints to my Divine Master. But He said to me, 'Continue, my Daughter, continue; it will be neither more nor less, whatever repugnance you may feel; My will must needs be accomplished.' 'But alas! my God, how can I remember what has passed more than twenty-five years ago?' 'Do you not know that I am the Eternal Memory of My Heavenly Father and forget nothing, and that in Me the past and the future are as the present? Write, then, without fear, as I shall dictate to you. I will shed on your writing the unction of My grace, in order that I may be thereby glorified. I wish this of you:—

"'First, that it may be seen that I make sport of all the precautions which you have taken to hide the graces with which I have taken pleasure in enriching with such profusion so poor and wretched a creature as you are. You should never lose the remembrance of these graces, but constantly praise Me for them.

"'In the second place, to teach you that you are not

to appropriate to yourself these graces, or be afraid of communicating them; for I have wished to make use of your heart as a channel to pour them, according to My designs, upon souls. Many will be drawn by this means from the abyss of perdition, as I will let you know hereafter.

“‘In the third place, in order to show that I am the Eternal Truth, that I am faithful to My promises, and that the favours which I have done you can stand every kind of examination and trial.’

“These words gave me such strength that, in spite of the extreme pain I feel at my writing being seen, I resolved to continue, whatever it might cost me, in order to accomplish the will of my Sovereign Master.”

But though Margaret, from the desire which she had to resemble our Blessed Lord in His sufferings, gladly endured this persecution as far as it affected herself, she felt keenly the suffering which it was the occasion of entailing upon her mother. But here again she experienced the singular intervention of our Blessed Lady, to whom she addressed herself with her usual confidence as Mediatrix with her Divine Son.

“My heaviest cross,” she says, “was, not to be able to lighten that of my mother, which was a hundred times harder for me to bear than my own. I did not even dare to give her the consolation of speaking of it, for fear that we might offend God by talking together of our troubles. It was especially in her sickness that my affliction was at its height. For, as she was left entirely to my care and the little services I could render her, she suffered a great deal; inasmuch as, everything being sometimes locked up, I had to go and beg even eggs and

other things required for the sick. This was no slight torture to me, in consequence of my natural timidity, especially as I was often very harshly received by the villagers. I had the pain of seeing that in an alarming attack of erysipelas, with which my mother was afflicted in her head, they were satisfied with having her bled by a common village surgeon who happened to pass, and who told me that she could not recover without a miracle. No one, except myself, was at all distressed or troubled at it. I was in constant distress. In the midst of all this I met only with mockery, injuries, and accusations. I did not know to whom to have recourse, or to whom to address myself, except to my ordinary refuge, the Blessed Virgin and my Sovereign Master.

“ Having gone to Mass on the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, to ask Him to be the physician of my poor mother Himself, and to teach me what I should do, He performed what I asked with such mercy that, on returning home, I found that the swelling on the face had burst, leaving a wound as large as the palm of the hand, which sent forth an intolerable smell. No one would go near her. I had no experience in dressing wounds; I could not before this even bear to see them or touch them. I had no ointment for dressing the wounds on my mother's face. I did nothing but cut away each day a great deal of the bad flesh, expecting everything from the hands of Divine Providence. I felt my courage and confidence in the goodness of my Sovereign Master increase, and I seemed to see Him constantly present. The wound was healed in a few days, contrary to all human expectation.

“During the whole of the time that my mother was ill I hardly ever went to bed or slept, and I hardly took any nourishment for days together. My Divine Master consoled and supported me by giving me a perfect conformity to His holy will. For amidst all that happened to me I had recourse to Him alone, saying to Him: ‘O my Sovereign Master, if it were not Thy will this would not have happened; but I thank Thee for permitting it, in order to make me like to Thee.’”

The sufferings which Margaret endured from this persecution served to wean her from the inclination to amusement to which her natural gaiety of disposition inclined her, and to re-awaken her taste for prayer. She hardly understood the meaning of the word, but the very name possessed a charm for her. Not knowing to whom to apply to instruct her to pray, she had recourse to our Lord. He would be Himself her Master, and He instructed her in a manner of praying which she retained all her life. Let us hear her own account: “I felt myself,” she says, “strongly drawn to prayer. This attraction which I felt was the occasion of a great deal of suffering to me, for it seemed to me that I could not satisfy it, not knowing how to make my prayer, and having no one to teach me, for I had no opportunity of conversing with spiritual persons. I knew nothing else of prayer but the name, and the very name of prayer ravished my heart with delight. I addressed myself, then, to my Sovereign Master, and He taught me how He wished I should make it; and this has served me all my life. He made me prostrate myself humbly before Him in order to beg pardon for everything by which I had offended Him. Then, after having adored

Him, I offered Him my prayer without knowing in what way I should apply myself to it. He then presented Himself to me in the Mystery in which He would have me consider Him, and He applied my mind so closely to it, holding my soul and all my powers so absorbed in Himself, that I felt no distraction. My heart felt consumed with the desire of loving Him, and this gave me an insatiable desire of Holy Communion and of sharing His sufferings.

“ I had only the night-time to pray in. I took what I could of it; and though the interior employment of my soul, of which I have spoken, was more delightful to me than I can express, I did not regard it as prayer, and I felt an earnest and increasing desire to be able to make it. I promised my Divine Master that as soon as He should have taught me, I would give to it all the time that I could. His goodness kept me so strongly fixed in this manner of prayer that it took from me all taste for vocal prayers.”

This desire of interior communication with our Lord led her constantly before the Blessed Sacrament. Keeping there as close as she could to the Altar, her desire of being as near as possible to our Lord overcoming her natural repugnance to attract notice, she required no words to express the sentiments of her heart. She was satisfied to remain in His presence, consuming herself, as she expresses it, before Him. Her love for the Blessed Sacrament rendered her ingenious in discovering means of gaining the good-will of her persecutors in order that she might spend some moments before It.

“ I could not make use any more of vocal prayer,” she says, “before the Blessed Sacrament, where I felt



myself so absorbed that I was never tired of being there. I would gladly have passed whole days and nights there, without eating or drinking. I did not well know what I did there, except that I consumed myself in His presence like a burning taper, in order to make Him a return of love for love. I could not remain at the bottom of the church, and though I felt a great confusion interiorly I did not fail to approach as near as I could to the Altar on which the Blessed Sacrament reposed. I envied only those who could communicate frequently, and who enjoyed the liberty of remaining before the Blessed Sacrament. I endeavoured to gain the good will of the persons of whom I spoke, in order to obtain from them the liberty of going to spend some minutes before Jesus Christ in this Mystery."

Margaret mentions here an incident which, owing either to an unwarrantable announcement made by the Curé of the village or her own misunderstanding, led to her being deprived of Holy Communion at Christmas. "I will notice here," she says, "what happened to me in punishment of my sins. On Christmas night, the Curé of the parish announced that those who had not slept could not go to Communion; and as I could never sleep on that night, I was prevented going to Communion, and, in consequence, that day of joy became for me a day of tears, which served me for food and enjoyment." What her sins were we may judge from those which she mentions, and which she deplored with tears all her life. "I had committed," she says, "great sins; for on one occasion, being in company with other young girls, I disguised myself during the time of Carnival, from a foolish desire to please them. This has been to me a subject of

sorrow and tears all my life, as also the faults which I had committed in wearing the trappings of vanity."

She here gives expression to the regret which she feels at the repugnance she has experienced in continuing her narrative, and her resolution to continue it, cost what it may. "The resistance which I have made to Thee so long, O my God! in submitting to finish this writing penetrates me still with sorrow and confusion. Have pity on my weakness, my Divine Master; support me that I may not sink under the rigour of Thy just reproaches. I protest, with the help of Thy grace, that I will no longer resist Thee, though it should cost me my life, and bring upon me the contempt of all creatures, and arm against me all the rage of hell. I beg pardon of Thee for my resistance, and strength to complete what Thou desirest of me, whatever repugnance my self-love may cause me to feel."

## CHAPTER III.

1665—1668.

BUT Margaret had yet a harder trial to undergo, and one which was the more dangerous, inasmuch as it came under the appearance of kindness, and veiled its attack under the powerful claims of natural affection and the specious sophistry of the world. Margaret had bound herself when quite a child, as we have seen, by a vow of perpetual chastity. She was now eighteen years of age, and her mother and her friends were desirous that she should marry. Her home, accordingly, which had been the scene of such unremitting persecution, changed its aspect, and Margaret was called upon to take part in gaieties and amusements in which her presence was intended to form the principal attraction. Many claimants for her hand presented themselves; for, though not rich, she was distinguished by a sweetness of disposition, piety, and prudence, which could not fail to attract those who looked for the best guarantee for happiness which a married state can offer. Margaret's lively disposition gave her a natural taste for amusement, and hence the society into which she was now thrown was likely to lead her into occasions of dissipation from which she had been already withdrawn.

Another and more powerful and insidious form under which the danger assailed her was her affection for her mother. Madame Alacoque was well

aware of the desire her daughter had long entertained of consecrating herself to the service of God in religion, and she was greatly alarmed at the thought of losing her; for she looked to her as her stay and support. "My dear daughter," she had said to her upon her miraculous recovery at the close of the Novena, which has been mentioned above, "since God has restored you your health, as I have begged of Him so long, it is doubtless His will that you should take care of it, to be the comfort of my old age. I beg of you in His name to grant me this satisfaction." Moreover, Madame Alacoque looked to the marriage of her daughter as offering the only prospect of escaping from the painful state of dependence to which she found herself reduced. We can understand, then, how bitter was the struggle in which Margaret was now engaged. On the one hand, the importunities of her friends, and the tears and distress of her mother, urged her unceasingly to marry. On the other, "God pursued my heart," she says, "so closely that He gave me no truce. I had my vow constantly before my eyes, together with the thought that, if I were unfaithful to it, I should be eternally lost."

The devil, taking advantage of the tender affection Margaret entertained for her mother, reminded her unceasingly of the tears she shed. He represented to her that if she followed out her intention of becoming a Religious she would cause her mother to die of grief, and that she would have to answer for it to God, as her mother was left entirely to her care. "This caused me," she says, "insupportable torture,

for I loved her so tenderly, and she me, that we could not live without seeing each other. On the other hand, the desire I had of being a Religious gave me no rest, joined to the horror I had of everything against purity. This made me suffer a real martyrdom." To crown her difficulties, Margaret had no one to whom she could open her mind, and who could give her counsel and guide her in her perplexity. "At length," she says, "the tender love I had for my good mother began to gain the upper hand. I thought that, as I was only a child at the time I made my vow, I might without difficulty be dispensed from it, especially as I did not understand, when I made it, what it really was." The devil was not slow at such times in urging, under the specious appearance of piety, that if she were engaged in religion she would be no longer at liberty to fast, give alms, and take the discipline as she wished. He represented to her also that so great was the sanctity which the state demanded of such as embraced it, that it would be impossible for her ever to hope to attain to it, and that in this state, therefore, she would undoubtedly lose her soul.

Induced by these reasons, Margaret began to enter more into the world, to pay more attention to dress, and to indulge more freely her natural inclination to gaiety. But our Lord was watching jealously over her heart. He drew it powerfully to Himself by His secret inspirations, and amidst the scenes of enjoyment which she promised herself rebuked her severely for her irresolution and want of fidelity. "Thou, O my God," she says, "sole witness of the greatness and length of the pain which this struggle brought upon me, and under

which I should have sunk a thousand times but for the extraordinary assistance of Thy mercy, Thou hadst far different designs from those which I was projecting in my heart. Thou madest me understand on this occasion, as on so many others, that it was indeed hard for me to resist the powerful goad of Thy love." The burning shafts of divine love, even in the midst of the scenes of her amusement, pierced her heart, as she describes it, through and through. "The grief which I felt in consequence," she says, "rendered me wholly powerless; and as this was not yet enough to detach a heart so ungrateful as mine, I felt myself, as it were, bound with cords, and drawn so powerfully that at last I was obliged to follow Him who called me." Margaret was led by this powerful inspiration to some retired spot, where our Lord rebuked her severely. "Alas!" she says, "He appeared jealous of my wretched heart." There, after she had begged His pardon, prostrate upon the ground, she would take a severe discipline. "And yet, after this," she says, "I did not fail to return to my vanities just as before, and I fell back into the same resistance." Finally, when in the evening she put aside her dress, "the accursed livery of Satan," as she describes it, our Lord presented Himself to her as He appeared after His Scourging, and reproached her deeply, saying that it was her vanities that had reduced Him to that state, that she was losing time which was infinitely precious, and of which He should demand of her a strict account at the hour of death; that she was betraying and persecuting Him after He had given her such proofs of His love, and of the desire which He had that she

should make herself like to Him. "All this," she says, "made so deep an impression on me, and inflicted so painful a wound on my heart, that I wept bitterly, and it would be difficult for me to express all that I suffered and all that passed at that time within me."

Had we only the accounts of those who lived with her, we should not have formed an idea of the struggle which was taking place in Margaret's heart. They speak only of her modesty and reserve, of her frequently retiring from company to give herself to exercises of piety, and of her ingenuity in discovering excuses which might enable her to absent herself without remark. They tell us that when any one came to see her she contrived to turn the conversation upon subjects relating to God, and that when it took another direction she would appear distracted, and make no reply. Her brother Chrysostom mentions expressly, with regard to her dress, that upon her mother's leaving it to her choice to select what was most tasteful, she would, as he says, with her ordinary humility and modesty, choose what was most plain. She gave no encouragement, he says, to any of the claimants for her hand in marriage, though in such a manner that all agreed in praising her virtues and good qualities, and the common impression prevailed that she contemplated religious life.

The reproaches made by our Lord, as He presented Himself to her in His state of suffering, inspired Margaret with the desire of taking vengeance on herself for the injuries she inflicted on Him, and in order that she might bear some resemblance to Him. "I did not know," she says, "what spiritual life was ;

for I had never heard mention of it. I only knew what my Divine Master taught me, and what He made me do with loving violence." "In the grief which constrained me," she says, "I tied this wretched criminal body with cords full of knots, and I bound it so tight that I could hardly breathe or eat. I left these cords there so long that they buried themselves in the flesh, and I could not tear them from it except with great violence and cruel pain. I did the same with little chains, which I fastened on my arms; I could only remove them by taking away with them pieces of the flesh. I lay during the night on a plank, or on knotty sticks, which I placed in my bed, and afterwards I took the discipline."

Margaret endeavoured also to find in these bodily penances a relief for that severe struggle which she was enduring in her mind, and in comparison with which all that she suffered exteriorly appeared to her as nothing. The sacrifice which our Lord was asking of her was the perfect sacrifice of her heart, and this, in the perplexity in which she found herself placed, she did not as yet understand how she was to make. Margaret had no one to whom she could open her mind. She bore her interior struggle in secret, and all that was known of it exteriorly was that she grew every day more pale, and was wasting away. "The fear that I had of offending God," she says, "tormented me more than all the rest. It seemed to me that my sins were continual, and they appeared to me so great that I was astonished that hell did not open under my feet to swallow up so miserable a sinner."

Margaret had passed several years amidst these



troubles and sufferings, with no other consolation than what she received from our Lord, Who made Himself her guide and director. The desire which she had formerly entertained of entering religion now awoke again within her so strongly that she resolved to do so, cost what it might. This must have been when she was about eighteen years of age ; for she was unable, she tells us, to carry this desire into effect for about four or five years. During the whole of that time her troubles and combats increased ; whilst she also increased her penances as our Lord allowed her.

Our Lord, indeed, produced a great change in her soul. She read only the lives of the Saints, and as she opened the book she would look for the life of a Saint which would be easy for her to imitate, that she also might become a Saint. As she asked of our Lord with simplicity to make her one, He showed her, she tells us, the beauty of virtue, and especially of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. It was in practising these, He told her, that she was to become a Saint. But the Saints, she thought, had never offended God, or, if they had, they had lived ever after in the practice of penance. This gave her a great desire of practising it. But our Lord impressed her so strongly at the same time with the fear of following in this her own will, that she was convinced, she says, that, whatever she might do, it would be pleasing to Him only so far as it proceeded from obedience and love. This excited in her a great desire of loving Him, and performing all her actions from obedience. She begged of our Lord, therefore,

to teach her what she should do in order to love Him.

Our Lord upon this bestowed upon her so tender a love for the poor that she would have desired, she says, to have no conversation with any but them. He inspired her with so tender a compassion for them that, as far as it was in her power, she would have left nothing for herself. When she had money she would give it to the little children to induce them to come to her, in order that she might teach them their prayers and their catechism. But even what she had herself she would not give away without the sanction of obedience, not only on the part of her mother, but also of those persons with whom she lived. This, as may be supposed, was a source of continual mortification to her. She thought that, in order to try whether she could live as a Religious, she should submit herself to those whom she felt the greatest repugnance in obeying. "But the ardent desire," she says, "which I felt to love God made me surmount every difficulty, and made me careful to do all that was most opposed to my natural inclination, and to which I felt the greatest repugnance."

Margaret was not content with supplying the poor with food and spiritual instruction; she would also dress their wounds. She felt naturally a strong repugnance even to look upon them, but her desire to conquer herself, and her love for our Lord, led her not only to handle, but even to kiss them. Her ignorance and inexperience in such matters was supplied for by the power of her Divine Master, Whose love had engaged her in them; and wounds, even the most

dangerous, were healed in a surprisingly short time. "I had more confidence," she says, "on my part, in His goodness than in the remedies I employed."

Her natural love of pleasure and amusement was constantly checked within her by the remembrance of what our Blessed Lord had suffered for her. "I could no longer find any relish," she says, "in anything of the kind, though I often did what I could to go in search of it." The sight of our Lord, Who presented Himself to her as He appeared after His Scourging, prevented her entering into any such enjoyment. He would reproach her in words which pierced her to the heart: "Would you then take this pleasure, whilst I have never taken any? I abandoned Myself to every kind of bitterness to gain your heart, and you would yet dispute it with Me!"

Margaret here complains of her want of gratitude for the graces which she received, for the jealous care with which our Lord had ever watched over her heart, and the powerful attraction by which He had drawn it to Himself. "This made a great impression," she says, "on my soul; but I acknowledge that I responded but very ill to all these graces." "My mind was so gross," is her own account of herself, "and so little spiritual, that I did good only because my Divine Master pressed me so strongly that I could not, so to say, resist. This is a great subject of confusion to me in all that I here write. Would that I could make known to the whole world how much I deserve the most rigorous chastisements for my continual resistance to God, and manifest, at the same time, the greatness of His mercies. For it seemed

as though He had undertaken to pursue my heart without respite, opposing continually His goodness to my malice, and His love to my ingratitude. The remembrance of this ingratitude has made the whole of my life the subject of the most lively grief to me. I can never make a sufficient acknowledgment of all that I owe to my Sovereign Benefactor, Who, in spite of my malice, has taken so loving a care of me from my cradle, and has continued it to me all my life."

As Margaret, lost in the thought of her own unworthiness, was expressing her astonishment at the ineffable condescension and patience of our Divine Lord, He gave her some intimation of the design for which He had chosen and fashioned her; and we may here see the part which He would have His Blessed Mother take in forming the apostle of His Sacred Heart. "It is because I have a desire," said our Blessed Lord, "to make of you as it were a compound of My love and mercy." "I chose you for My Spouse," He said to her another time, "and we promised mutual fidelity when you made the vow of chastity. It was I who pressed you to make the vow before the world had any part in your heart, because I would have your heart wholly pure, and unsullied by any earthly affections; and, in order to preserve you in this state, I kept your will from the malice which might have corrupted it. After this, I consigned you to the care of My holy Mother, that she might fashion you according to My designs."

"And in truth," remarks Margaret, "the Blessed Virgin has always acted as a Mother to me, and has never refused me her assistance. I went to her in all my troubles and wants, and I went to her with such

confidence that it seemed to me as though I had nothing to fear under her maternal protection. I made a vow to her, at this time, to fast every Saturday, and to say the Office of the Immaculate Conception when I should be able to read it, and to make seven genuflections every day of my life, with seven *Ave Marias*, to honour her Seven Dolours, and I consecrated myself to be for ever her slave, begging of her not to refuse me this character. I spoke to her with simplicity, like a child, as to my good mother, for whom I felt even then penetrated with a truly tender love." This divine Mother had occasion to reprove her severely, she says, when she saw her again almost ready to sink under the terrible struggle she had so long to sustain, and which was again renewed when Margaret was now about twenty years of age.

In spite of the graces which she received from our Lord, Margaret felt that she could no longer resist the persecutions of her family and the tears and tenderness of her mother. The devil, too, constantly suggested to her the thought: "What could she, wretched creature as she was, be thinking of in wishing to be a Religious? She would render herself the laughing-stock of every one; she would never persevere; and how could she stand the confusion of quitting the convent and returning to the world?" Assailed thus on every side, and without a guide to throw light upon her perplexities, Margaret began to yield, in spite of the horror with which she looked upon such a step. "I began," she says, "to give in to my mother's wish that I should settle in the world; but I could not think of it without shedding abundant tears, for I felt

an inexpressible horror of marriage." Our Blessed Lord Himself, Who had always kept the remembrance of her vow before her mind, took pity upon her in her perplexity, and poured light and peace upon her soul.

It was one day after receiving Him in Holy Communion that this happy change was wrought in her, and her heart at once enjoyed a profound peace. He allowed her to see clearly that He deserved the preference above all earthly rivals. "He showed me," she says, "that He was more worthy of love, more wealthy, powerful, and perfect than any of the sons of men, and He reproached me that, after having promised myself to Him so many years, I should still think of breaking my engagement with Him, and entering into any other alliance." "Oh! be assured," He added, "that if you do Me this injury I will abandon you for ever; but if you remain faithful to Me I will never leave you, and I will be Myself your strength and your victory to triumph over your enemies. I excuse your ignorance because as yet you do not know Me; but if you wish to follow Me, I will teach you to know Me, and I will manifest Myself to you." The effect of these words was to breathe a profound calm upon the soul of Margaret. It is thus that our Divine Lord assures the faithful soul of His presence; He banishes all wavering doubts, and addresses to it those words by which He consoled His disciples after His Resurrection—"Peace be to you; it is I, fear not." He filled Margaret with so strong a resolution that she determined at once to die rather than ever change, and so entirely had her difficulties disappeared that it seemed to her, as she

expresses it, as though her chains were broken and she had no longer anything to fear. All that she had most dreaded in religious life appeared now as nothing compared with the danger she had escaped. Her distrust gave way to a loving confidence; and in place of her former irresolution she gave up her liberty unreservedly to our Lord. "On my having fixed my determination," she says, "to embrace a religious life, the Divine Spouse of my soul, as though He feared that I might yet escape Him, asked me to give my consent that He might take possession and make Himself master of my liberty, seeing how feeble I was. I gave my consent with all my heart, and from that moment He took such entire possession of my liberty that it seemed to me as though I had no longer any use of it. I renewed my vow, beginning now to understand its real nature, and I told Him that, even though it should cost me a thousand lives, I would never be anything but a Religious."

Margaret openly avowed her intention, and her family and friends clearly understood that her final resolution had been taken. Even her mother, though she could not restrain her tears in secret, no longer ventured to combat her daughter's purpose. Her friends, however, still continued to urge upon her reasons for remaining in the world; and her brother offered her part of his own fortune with a view to secure her a more advantageous settlement. But to all such appeals, "my heart," she says, "had become as insensible as a rock." She had still, however, to remain three years more in the world, combating these and similar difficulties.

## CHAPTER IV.

1668—1671.

THOUGH it was sufficiently understood that Margaret was to enter Religion, there was still question as to the particular Order to which she was called. One of her uncles, who was also her guardian, having invited her to visit him at his house at Mâcon, Margaret was thus led to make acquaintance with one of his daughters, a Religious in the convent of the Ursulines in that town. The good Nun, seeing Margaret's desire to embrace religious life, did all in her power to engage her cousin to remain with her in her own convent. She urged every argument that her affection for her could suggest, and begged of her father to use all his influence and authority with Margaret to the same end. She even offered to share with her the sum of money which her own family paid annually for her, and to obtain from the Community a diminution in Margaret's favour of a quarter of the dowry which was commonly paid on entering the convent. Margaret felt great difficulty in resisting these urgent appeals, owing to the affection she entertained for her cousin, and her deference for her uncle, who treated her as one of his own children. She was satisfied, however, that it was not here that our Lord would have her be, and she said to her cousin: "See, if I were to enter into



your convent, it would only be from my affection for you. My wish is to go to some place where I have neither relations nor acquaintances, in order that I may become a Religious for the love of God." But still, as she did not know what was the Order to which she was called, having had so few opportunities of making acquaintance with any, she found it no easy task to combat the powerful appeals that were made to induce her to remain. Her brother, who had not as yet given his consent to her entering Religion, was much annoyed with her, as he supposed that all that was taking place was done with her consent, and that she wished to enter the convent in spite of him and without the consent of her family. But the interior voice of our Lord was silently calling Margaret to a different Order, and though it was in accents which were as yet but indistinct, still they were sufficiently clear to prevent her adopting any such course as her brother attributed to her. "I was far," she says, "from entertaining such a design, for the more strongly I was urged to enter, the greater distaste I felt for it, and a secret voice said to me, 'I do not wish you there, but with Holy Mary.'"

It was the name of Holy Mary that possessed a secret charm for Margaret. This was almost all she knew at this time of the Order founded by St. Francis of Sales, and though her friends did all in their power to prevent her making acquaintance with any of its monasteries, the name alone was as "oil poured out," breathing a fragrance which attracted her to the Daughters of the Visitation of Holy Mary. The more attempts that were made to turn her aside, "the

greater desire I felt," she says, "to enter. I was attracted by the sweet name of 'Holy Mary,' and I felt that it was there that I was to find what I was in search of." The Holy Founder, too, seemed to give his future Daughter an intimation of the place which our Lord had destined for her in his family. "One day," she says, "as I was looking at a picture of the great St. Francis of Sales, it seemed to me that he cast so tender and paternal a look upon me, addressing me at the same time as his Daughter, that I regarded him from that time forward in no other light than as my Father."

She did not dare, however, to breathe a word regarding these thoughts to any one; and so urgent were her cousin and the whole Community in their attempts to keep her with them, that she could hardly have escaped their affectionate importunities, when our Lord Himself interposed, and extricated her from the difficult position in which she was placed. "They were on the point," she says, "of opening to me the gate of the convent, when I received the news that my brother was very ill and my mother at the point of death. This obliged me to leave at once to go to her, nor could they prevent my going, though I was myself ill. But, indeed, my ailment arose rather from the regret which I felt at seeing myself forced to enter a convent to which I thought I was not called by God than from any other cause."

Margaret was thus delivered from the danger to which she was exposed, but on her return home she found herself again involved in troubles similar to those by which she had been beset before. She was told

that it was now evident that her mother could not live without her, and that, if she left her, she would be answerable for her death. This was said to her even by ecclesiastics, and caused her great pain in consequence of the affection which she entertained for her mother; "and the devil," she says, "took advantage of it to make me believe that this would cause me to lose my soul."

Our Lord, on the other hand, urged her powerfully to carry out her resolution of leaving all to follow Him, and the strong desire which she felt of conforming herself to Him in His suffering life made her think lightly of anything she had to suffer for His sake.

She gained fresh strength for combating the difficulties against which she had to contend by receiving at this time, in the year 1669, the Sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of Monsignor Jean de Meaupou, Bishop of Châlons-sur-Saône, who was making his visitation at Vérosvres. She took, on this occasion, the name of Mary in addition to that of Margaret, in order to bind herself by a fresh obligation to the Blessed Virgin. The Holy Spirit filled her with an increased desire of conforming herself to our Blessed Lord. She would express this desire as she cast herself at the feet of her crucifix by saying, "How happy should I be, my dear Lord, if Thou wouldst imprint in me the likeness of Thy sufferings!" "This is what I design to do," our Lord replied, "provided that you do not resist, and do what you can on your part." She redoubled, with this view, her penances. "In order to give Him," she says, "some drops of my blood, I tied my fingers tightly, and then pierced them with needles.

I took the discipline every day in Lent, as far as I was able, in order to honour His Scourging. On the three last days of the Carnival I would gladly have cut myself in pieces to repair the outrages which sinners offered to His Divine Majesty. I fasted on these three days, as far as I could, on bread and water, giving to the poor all that was given me for my nourishment."

Together with this desire of suffering in imitation of our Blessed Lord, Margaret Mary was filled with no less desire of receiving Him in Holy Communion. It was the thought of the opportunities which she would enjoy in Religion of frequently communicating that filled her with the greatest joy when she contemplated leaving the world. She was enabled to enjoy that privilege but rarely now. She would have regarded herself as the happiest person in the world if she could have done so frequently, and if she might have been allowed to pass whole nights alone before the Blessed Sacrament. "I felt such confidence when I was there," she says, "that, though I was naturally extremely timid, I had no longer any such feeling as soon as I was in that place of my dearest delights." On the eve of Communion she was absorbed in profound recollection, and could with difficulty speak. After Communion she would have been glad neither to eat nor drink, see or speak with any one, so great were the consolation and peace which she felt.

This intimate union with our Lord in Holy Communion gave her a great desire of recollection and prayer, in order that she might the better learn how to love our Lord ; for, though she had been taught by her Divine Master Himself, she thought she had still

to learn how to pray. It was in the midst of difficulties now that she had to practise prayer and recollection, for she was still constantly exposed to those domestic persecutions which have been described above. "I sought retirement," she says, "as much as I could, in order to learn in silence to love my Sovereign Good, Who pressed me to make Him a return of love for love. But I thought I could never love Him as I should, whatever I might do, unless I learned how to pray. I knew only what my Divine Master taught me, that is to say, to abandon myself to all His divine movements when I could shut myself up with Him in some retired spot. But I had but little leisure allowed me, for I had to work all day long with the servants; and then in the evening it appeared that I had done nothing to satisfy the persons with whom I lived. I was so scolded that I had no heart to eat, and I withdrew myself when I best could to find a few minutes' peace, which I so much desired."

Our Blessed Lord had taught Margaret Mary the excellence of obedience; she begged of Him, therefore—in the fear she had lest her actions, and especially her mortifications, might fail to please Him, from their proceeding from self-will—to send her some one who might guide her in her wish to serve Him. "Am I not sufficient for you?" was the reply she received from our Lord. "What do you fear? Is it possible that a child so fondly loved as you are should be lost in the arms of an all-powerful Father?" Our Lord, however, complied with her request by sending her a holy Franciscan Father, who came to the village on occasion of the Jubilee granted in 1670 by Clement X., on his ac-

cession to the Pontificate, and remained there some time, in order to hear the confessions of the inhabitants. This was a means which our Lord had also provided to enable Margaret to carry out her desire of entering Religion. In her anxiety to make a complete confession, and to omit nothing in exposing to the good Father the state of her soul, Margaret had spent more than a fortnight in writing out her confession. "It seemed to me," she says, "that I could never do enough with it, in consequence of my great sins. I was penetrated with so lively a sorrow for them that I not only shed abundance of tears, but would gladly, in the excess of my sorrow, have published them before the whole world." In her simplicity, and in the persuasion that, owing to her blindness, she could not form an adequate idea of her sins, or express their enormity, she copied out whole pages from books treating of the examination of conscience, and thought that it was right that she should at least have the confusion of accusing herself of sins, the commission of which would have filled her with horror. Such a confession might with reason have given her considerable scruples, were it not, as she says herself, that our Lord had assured her that He pardoned all to a will without malice. She was not allowed by her Confessor, as may be supposed, to gratify her wish, and was ordered to pass over several pages, even though, as she says, "I begged of him to allow me to satisfy my conscience, as I was a greater sinner than he supposed."

This confession had the effect of leaving Margaret in peace. She told the Father something of her manner of life, though she did not dare to tell him all; for

“I thought,” she says, “that it would be vanity to do so.” She received from him advice upon many points. She discovered to him also the resolution she had taken to enter Religion, and how she had been detained by her brother in the world for four or five years. The Father hereupon spoke to her brother so strongly on the subject, that Chrysostom asked his sister whether she still continued in the same mind ; and on hearing her reply that she would rather die than change, he promised to allow her to carry out her wishes. He went accordingly to speak regarding her dowry with her cousin, the Ursuline Religious, who had still continued to use every means to induce her to enter her own convent. It was the wish of her mother also, and of her friends, that she should enter this convent. Margaret, not knowing how to escape the difficulty which thus again pressed her, recurred to her usual resource, the intervention of “her good Mistress,” the Blessed Virgin. Our Blessed Lady consoled her, and said to her lovingly, “Fear nothing ; you shall be indeed my Daughter, and I will be always your good Mother.” “These words delighted me,” remarks Margaret, “and left me no doubt that my desires would be accomplished, in spite of all opposition.” Her brother, on his return, mentioned the sum required for her dowry, and told her that it was for her to make the arrangement, as the agreement was not yet concluded. “It will never be concluded,” replied Margaret, resolutely. “My wish is to go to the ‘Holy Maries,’ in some convent at a distance, where I have neither relatives nor acquaintances, for I will be a Religious only for the love of God. I wish to abandon the world entirely, and to bury myself

in retirement, where I may forget it and be forgotten by it, and never see it again." Her friends proposed to her several convents without being able to satisfy her mind; "but as soon," she says, "as they named Paray to me, my heart dilated with joy, and I gave my consent at once."

A last visit, which she paid before her departure to the convent of the Dames Urbanistes, under whose care she had been placed when eight years of age, was the occasion of a severe struggle which she had yet to endure. The good Religious took their former pupil into the convent, telling her that she was their child, and asking why she would leave them, seeing how tenderly they loved her. They could not bear, they said, to see her join the "Holy Maries," convinced as they were that she would not persevere with them. Margaret replied that she would make the attempt. They made her promise that, if she left, she would return to them. "But whatever they could say to me," she says, "my heart remained insensible, and was only the more firmly strengthened in its resolution."

"I pass over," says Margaret, in her narrative, "all the other combats I had to endure, to come speedily to the scene of my happiness, my dear Paray." No sooner had she entered the parlour than she heard these words addressed to her interiorly—"It is here that I would have you be." She accordingly told her brother that he must absolutely come to a settlement and final agreement, for she was determined never to go anywhere else. This resolution on the part of Margaret Mary surprised him the more as he had brought



her to Paray only to see the Religious of Holy Mary. But she was determined not to leave until all had been settled. "After this," she says, "I seemed to receive a new life, so great was the happiness and peace which I felt. And this made me so gay, even outwardly, that those who did not know what was passing in my heart remarked, 'she has not very much the air of a Religious.' In fact, I was dressed in a more worldly way than I had ever been before, and I also showed great gaiety of manner, in consequence of the great interior joy which I felt at seeing myself on the point of being wholly consecrated to my Sovereign Good. Alas," she concludes, "as I write this He often makes me this loving reproach: 'See, my Daughter, if you can find a father wounded with love for an only son, who has ever taken such care of him, and given him such marks of affection as I have given you, and am ready still to give you. My love has never ceased to cultivate your soul from your tenderest infancy, and fashion it according to My Heart, waiting for you with patience and gentleness, without being repelled by all your resistance. Remember, then, that were you ever to forget the gratitude you owe Me, and fail to refer all the glory to Me, it would be the means of drying up for you this inexhaustible source of good.'"

## CHAPTER V.

1671.

MARGARET MARY returned home, in order to arrange some temporal affairs. These were speedily settled, and she then bade adieu, with indescribable joy, to all that had before engaged her tenderest affection. "At length," she says, "the long-desired day on which I was to bid adieu to the world having come, never did my heart feel such joy and strength. It was in a manner insensible as well to friendship as the grief which my friends, my mother especially, testified at my departure. I did not shed a tear on leaving them; I felt as if I was a slave delivered from chains and prison to enter the house of her Spouse, to take possession of it, and to enjoy in full liberty His presence, His goods, and His love. It was thus He spoke to my heart, which was quite out of itself. I could give no other account of my vocation to 'Holy Mary,' but that I wished to be a Daughter of the Blessed Virgin."

But Margaret Mary was to endure one last severe struggle before entering her abode of peace. "I must acknowledge here," she says, "that when the time came for my entering the monastery, which was on a Saturday, I was assailed by such violent trouble, that it seemed to me that my soul was on the point of being separated from my body. But no sooner had I

entered than my trouble ceased, and it was shown me that our Lord had taken off from me the sackcloth of my captivity, and clothed me with the robe of gladness. I was, in fact, so transported with joy, that I exclaimed, 'It is here that my God would have me be.'"

We are reminded in this of what St. Teresa mentions regarding herself on her quitting the world to enter religion. "I still remember," she says, "as if it were to-day, how, as I was leaving my father's house, I felt in such a state that I think if I had been at the point of death I could not have felt greater pain. It seemed as if all my bones were torn one from the other. . . . But our Lord allowed me to feel, the moment I put on the habit, what special favours He has in store for those who do violence to their own inclinations for the love of Him. This interior struggle was known only to Him. I showed outwardly only constancy and resolution. But no sooner was I clothed, than I felt such joy at seeing myself thus engaged that it has lasted ever since."

The little Monastery of Paray had been now founded forty-five years when it opened its doors to Margaret Mary in her twenty-third year, on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, the 25th of May, 1671. It numbered at this time thirty-three Choir Sisters, three Lay Sisters, and three Novices. Sixteen years after the foundation of the Order of the Visitation, and when already a considerable number of Houses were flourishing in the larger towns of France, Fr. Paul de Barry, of the Society of Jesus, effected the establishment of a Community in the little City of Paray. His object was to provide a means of counteracting the ravages

made by Calvinism, and he suggested to the inhabitants of Paray that there could be none more effectual than the establishment amongst them of a House of the Daughters of the Visitation, whose lives were designed to reflect the gentleness and humility of our Divine Lord. Fr. de Barry, having interested the inhabitants in his pious design, availed himself of the influence of Madame de Ragny with her husband, at that time Governor of Charolais, to carry it into effect. All obstacles were removed, and on the 4th of September, 1626, a little colony of Visitandines, from the Monastery of Bellecour at Lyons, came and planted themselves at Paray. They were severely tried by poverty soon after their first settlement; so much so that the holy Foundress feared at one time that she should be obliged to recal her Daughters, so wholly unprovided were they with support. But the adorable providence of our Lord had designs of signal mercy upon this house; and forty-five years later it received within its walls Margaret Mary, who was chosen by Him to become the Apostle of His Sacred Heart.

Margaret Mary was impressed, on her entrance into the monastery, with the one thought that she was to give herself up unreservedly to our Lord. "I felt at once," she says, "engraved on my soul that this house of God was a holy place; that all who dwelt in it ought to be saints; and that the very name of Holy Mary signified to me that I must be so at any price; that I ought with this view to abandon myself to God without hesitation, and sacrifice myself to Him without reserve. This thought made all sweet to me that appeared hard in the beginning."

She was awakened every morning for some days by the following words, which she heard distinctly, without, however, being able to understand their meaning: "Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity,"\* with the rest of the verse. At other times: "Hearken, O daughter, and see,"† &c. &c.; and also the following: "Thou hast recognised thy path and thy way, O Jerusalem, house of Israel; the Lord shall guide thee in all thy ways, and shall never abandon thee." "I gave with simplicity an account of all this," she says, "to my good Mistress. I looked upon her, as also upon my Mother Superior, as my Jesus upon earth."

The Mistress of Novices at the time that Margaret Mary entered the Monastery of Paray was Sister Anne Frances Thouvant. She had been the first to take the habit in the Community of Paray, and when quite a young Professed she had attracted the attention of St. Jane Frances de Chantal on her different visits to Paray. The virtues which adorned her long career of religious life showed the justice of discernment which characterised the sainted Foundress. At the time our Lord conducted Margaret Mary to Paray, Sister Anne Frances Thouvant, besides being Mistress of Novices, was also Assistant and Councillor. After forty-four years of religious profession, during which she had been four times named Mother Superior, she had the privilege of being entrusted with the charge of Blessed Margaret Mary in her Noviceship. The Mother Superior at this time was Mother Margaret Jeronima Hersant. She was distinguished, as the records of her religious Sisters tell us, by a great love of God,

\* Ps. xliv. 8.

† Ps. xliv. 11.

a tender charity for her neighbour, and a profound humility, and was regarded in the different monasteries in which she lived as a saint.

Margaret Mary felt all the happiness of that true liberty which our Lord had provided for her by enabling her to live under obedience in Religion ; and she accordingly gave herself up wholly to the practice of this virtue. The instructions of her Mother Superior and of her Mistress she regarded as the voice of our Lord Himself, and she feared nothing as long as she acted under obedience. She had an opportunity of experiencing the blessing which our Lord attaches to the practice of this humble submission on occasion of asking her Mistress instructions on the subject of prayer. Margaret had to assure her Mistress that she did not know how to make it ; “for she could not believe,” she says, “that having entered Religion at the age of twenty-three, I should be ignorant of it.” Her Mistress, whether to try her obedience, or perhaps having reason to think that she had already another Instructor, told her, “Go and place yourself before our Lord as a blank canvas before a painter.” “I could have wished,” says Margaret, “that she had explained her injunction to me more fully, for I did not understand it, and I did not dare to tell her so. But I heard internally these words, ‘Come, and I will teach you.’ And in fact, no sooner did I kneel down to pray than my Sovereign Master showed me that my soul was the canvas on which He would paint all the features of His life, which had passed in love and privation, in action and silence, and was consummated at last in sacrifice ; that He would impress the same on my soul after He had purified me from all the

blemishes which remained in me, whether from affection to earthly things, or from the love of myself and creatures, towards which my good-natured disposition gave me a considerable inclination. At the same time, He stripped me of all affection, and having emptied my heart, and left my soul as it were entirely naked, He enkindled in it so ardent a desire of loving Him, and of suffering, that He gave me no rest, pursuing me so close that I had no time to think of anything but how I might love Him by crucifying myself."

Perhaps our Lord made known to Margaret on this occasion the many opportunities of suffering with which He provided her during her life, and which it will be seen were almost constant.

After being thus instructed by our Lord in the school of prayer, Margaret received at this time from her holy Founder a lesson in obedience, which virtue, as it lies at the foundation of all religious life, is intimately united with those of meekness and humility, which are specially characteristic of the Order of the Visitation. She had received permission from her Mistress for the practice of some penance, but she was inclined to carry it out in a manner which went beyond her intention. "As I was intending to put this into execution," she says, "my holy Founder reproved me so severely, that I never afterwards dared resume it." "What! my Daughter," he said to her, "do you think to please God in passing the bounds of obedience, which, and not austerities, is the principal foundation of this Congregation?" "These words," she says, "have ever remained engraved on my heart."

We may notice here what is the opinion which was

formed of the natural character and disposition of Margaret Mary by those who had the best opportunities of appreciating them. According to the account of the Reverend Mother Greyfié, under whom, as her Mother Superior, Margaret lived for six years, from 1678 to 1684, she was by nature possessed of a good judgment and discretion, of a good understanding, of a gentle and agreeable disposition, and of an extremely charitable heart. In a word, it might be said of her, that she was singularly calculated to succeed in anything, had not our Lord listened to her request to be allowed to remain unknown and hidden in abjection and suffering.\* Fr. Croiset also, who was acquainted with her, says: "God had given her considerable understanding, a solid, clear, and penetrating judgment, a noble soul, and a large heart."†

It was evident, on Margaret's first entering on religious life, that her Divine Spouse was Himself conducting her in the way of perfection. Never had there been seen in a Postulant a combination of so many rare qualities. And yet these presented but a faint sketch of the virtues which manifested themselves in her on her being clothed with the holy habit, three months after her entrance, on the 25th of August. Our Lord gave her to understand that from this time He took a new possession of her heart, and that He asserted a fresh claim upon her love of preference for Him. "Having passed my probation," she says, "with an ardent desire of seeing myself wholly consecrated to

\* *Memoirs of Blessed Margaret Mary.* By the Rev. Mother Greyfié.

† *Abridgement of the Life of Blessed Margaret Mary.*



God, and being clothed with our holy habit, my Divine Master explained to me that it was the time of our espousals, which gave Him new dominion over me, and imposed upon me a double engagement of loving Him with a love of preference. And He gave me to understand that, after the manner of the most passionate lovers, He would make me taste at the commencement all that was most charming in the sweetness of His love."

The spiritual consolations which she experienced were so great that they almost deprived her of the power of action, and filled her with confusion. This brought upon her many a severe rebuke, for she was told that such a mode of proceeding was foreign to the spirit of the Order, which admitted of nothing that was extraordinary. "I was reproved," she says, "for manifesting such dispositions, and I was told that such was not the spirit of the Daughters of Holy Mary, which would have nothing extraordinary, and that, if I did not get out of this state, I could not be received to my Profession." "This plunged me," she says, "into great desolation. I made every exertion, and spared no effort, to draw myself out of this way; but all my efforts were useless." Her Mistress also on her part laboured to the same end, though Margaret was unconscious of the design she had in view. Finding that Margaret had an extraordinary desire to learn how to pray, and yet, whatever effort she made, could not follow the method taught her, but would always, in spite of every exertion to the contrary, return to that taught her by her Divine Master, she appointed her assistant to a Sister

in her office, by whom she was employed in working during the whole time of prayer. "After this," continues Margaret, "on my going to ask my Mistress permission to resume it, she dismissed me harshly, telling me that I made my prayer in doing the work of the Noviceship." "This I discharged," she says, "without its being able to distract me from the sweet joy and consolation which my soul enjoyed, and which I felt increase every day. I was ordered, after hearing the points of the morning Meditation, to go out and sweep the part of the court marked out for me until Prime. After Prime I had to give an account of my prayer, or rather of that which my Sovereign Master made within me. In all this, as I had no other view but to obey, I felt interiorly an extreme pleasure, whatever was the pain I suffered in consequence in my body. So great was the joy with which I was transported that I could not refrain from singing—

Plus l'on contredit mon amour,  
Plus cet unique bien m'enflamme ;  
Que l'on m'afflige nuit et jour,  
On ne peut l'ôter à mon âme.  
Plus je souffrirai de douleur,  
Plus je m'unirai à son cœur.\*

\* It is difficult to express in a translation the simplicity of the original.

## CHAPTER VI.

1671.

IT was the voice of our Divine Lord Himself, as we have seen, that led Margaret Mary by a mysterious attraction to the Order of the Visitation. It was to a Daughter of St. Francis of Sales, whose own life reflected so strongly the gentleness and humility of the Heart of Jesus, and who had established his Order especially to exhibit these his favourite virtues in action, that our Lord would confide the mission of establishing the Devotion to His Sacred Heart.

And yet, so extraordinary were the graces by which our Lord communicated Himself to the Apostle of His Sacred Heart, and prepared her for her privileged task, that the very Devotion itself, which was to form the glory of the Order, found a difficulty for a time in making its claims recognised, from a fear that it was at variance with the simplicity of the Institute.

Hence it is interesting to trace the historical and vital connection between the Order of the Visitation and the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord.

The name of St. Francis of Sales recalls the thought of those virtues which our Lord has told us are especially to be learnt in the school of His Sacred Heart.

And as they set their stamp upon his actions, so they breathe their spirit throughout his writings. It was in the Sacred Heart of our Lord that he made his abode, and it was from thence that he drew that charity which distinguished him in his dealings with others. "How good our Lord is!" he writes to St. Jane Frances de Chantal, "how amiable is His Heart! Let us take up our abode in this holy dwelling. May His Heart ever live in our hearts."\* "The other day," he writes again, "as I was in prayer, and was contemplating the opened Side of our Lord, and looking upon His Heart, I bethought me that our hearts were gathered all around It, and paid homage to It as the Sovereign King of Hearts."†

It is of the virtues of the Sacred Heart that he ever speaks in his conferences with his Daughters, for it was to honour the Heart of Jesus by the practice of his favourite virtues of meekness and humility that he instituted his Order of the Visitation. "To attain the end for which our Congregation of the Visitation was instituted," are the terms in which he addresses them, "and in order to understand more easily what is the peculiar spirit of the Visitation, I have always considered that it was a spirit of profound humility towards God, and of great gentleness towards our neighbour." Such is the perfection which he proposes to his Daughters of the Visitation. "Their hands are employed," he says, "only in gathering at the foot of the Cross the little virtues of humility, gentleness, and simplicity, which grow there, and are bedewed with

\* *Letters of St. Francis of Sales.* Bk. i., lett. 64.

† *Letters.* Bk. iv., lett. 101.

the Blood of their Beloved, fastened by nails to their hearts as He is upon the Cross.”\*

Whilst the interior spirit of the Daughters of the Visitation is drawn from the Heart of Jesus, the very emblem which distinguishes the Order, given to them by their holy Founder himself, expresses the same truth. The history of its origin is remarkable; for it seems to show that long before the revelation of the Devotion to his holy Daughter, he had seen it in a manner embodied, and was able to present it to his Children under a form closely resembling that in which it was subsequently manifested by our Lord Himself to Blessed Margaret Mary.

One morning in June, in the year 1611, the holy Bishop, detained at home by business, took up his pen to communicate to St. Jane Frances de Chantal the thoughts with which he had been inspired during the preceding night.

“Good morning, my dear Daughter,” he writes. “An arrangement which I have to make this morning between two of our Pastors of Gex, deprives me of the consolation of going to see my dear flock and of feeding them myself with the Bread of Life. M. Rolland† must supply in my absence. He cannot, however, convey to you as I could wish the thought with which Almighty God inspired me last night. It is this: that our House of the Visitation has now, by His grace, attained sufficient nobility to have its own arms, crest, and device. I have

\* *Spirit of the Religious of the Visitation of Holy Mary.* Explained by the Venerable Servant of God, Francis of Sales. Paris, 1657.

† The confidential servant of St. Francis of Sales.

thought, then, my dear Mother, if you agree with me, that we should take for our armorial bearings a heart pierced by two arrows and encircled by a crown of thorns; this poor heart serving as a base for a cross surmounting it, and bearing engraved upon it the holy names of Jesus and Mary. I will tell you, my Daughter, when we next meet, a number of thoughts which have occurred to me on this subject; for, indeed, our little Congregation is the work of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Our Divine Saviour when dying gave us birth by the opening of His Sacred Heart; it is but just then that our hearts, by the practice of constant mortification, should be always encircled by the crown of thorns which rested on the Head of our Lord, whilst His love held Him fast upon the throne of His mortal anguish.

“Good morning, my Daughter, for I see our litigants are coming to break in upon our peaceful thoughts.”\*

Who can fail to see here a foreshadowing of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart embodied in this beautiful emblem, which still serves to record to the Daughters of the Visitation the thoughts of their holy Founder regarding the Sacred Heart? And so faithfully did his Daughters express in their lives that character which he had set before them, that in 1657—between forty and fifty years later—the Bishop of Puy was able publicly to claim for them, in his *Life of St. Francis of Sales*, the title of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. In this work, dedicated to Pope Alexander VII., who shortly afterwards pronounced the beatification and

\* From the collection of letters of St. Francis of Sales preserved in the Monastery of the Visitation at Pignerol.

canonisation of the Saint, he declares, in the language of the Saint himself, that “they were established especially in this last age to be the imitators of the two virtues dearest to the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word, which serve as the base and foundation of their Order, and give them the privilege and incomparable favour of bearing the character of Daughters of the Heart of Jesus.”\*

The same sentiment we find constantly living in the minds of the most gifted of the Order. Such was the Mother Anne Margaret Clement, who died in the odour of sanctity in 1661, in the Monastery of Melun, which she had founded. This holy Religious, whose life was written by Father Augustine Galice, afterwards General of the Barnabites, was in the habit of saying that her Blessed Father had made his dwelling in the Heart of Jesus, and that as Moses by his converse with God became the mildest of men, “so her Blessed Father by his familiar intercourse with his Beloved attained to the perfection of the two virtues of the Heart of Jesus—humility and gentleness.” She added that this holy law-giver had been inspired to found an Order in the Church to honour the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ and His two dearest virtues, which are the foundation of the rules and constitutions of the Visitation.†

The last testimony which we will quote is that of Jane Benigne Gojos, a simple Lay Sister of the Monas-

\* *Life of the Venerable Servant of God, Francis of Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva.* By Messire Henry de Maupas du Tour, Bishop and Lord of Puy, &c. P. 310. Paris, 1657.

† *Life of the Ven. Mother Anne Margaret Clement, &c.* Paris, 1686. The work bears the approbation of the illustrious Cardinal Bona.

tery of Turin. Received into the Noviceship by the Mother de Chantal in 1638, she was towards the close of her long life contemporary with Margaret Mary, and survived her by two years. She had, however, no communication with her, and it is possible, considering the distance by which she was separated from her, that she died without having heard her name. Supernaturally enlightened, however, she announced in 1687 the important mission which Blessed Margaret Mary was called to fulfil in the Church. In speaking of the first Mothers of the Order, she would say that they were "true Daughters of the Heart of Jesus, gentle, humble, all love for God, and all charity for their neighbour."\*

We see, then, how the Order of the Visitation, to which Margaret Mary was so mysteriously called, whatever was the opposition and trial which she met with in it, was prepared from its first institution for receiving the Devotion which she was chosen by our Lord to introduce.

The Order of the Visitation was itself the first to experience the saving power of the important mission it accepted and so faithfully discharged. It was preserved by it amidst perils under which many religious congregations sank, and it has been the means of communicating its blessings throughout the Church at large.

\* *The Charm of Divine Love; or the Life of the devout Sister Jane Benigne Gojos, &c.* By Mother Mary Geltrude Provane de Leyni, Religious of the same Order in 1693. Turin, 1846.



## CHAPTER VII.

1671—1672.

THE spirit of prayer is necessarily united with the desire of mortification. For as prayer is an exercise of union with God, the soul, in its desire to attain a more perfect union, feels itself obliged to clear itself as far as it can of those obstacles which the earthly tendencies of human nature place in the way of this union. Hence, whilst our Lord united Margaret Mary so closely to Himself by prayer, He inspired her at the same time with a great desire of mortification. Though, from the warmth and tenderness of her natural disposition, she felt humiliations very sensibly, our Lord constantly urged her to ask for them; and at times she received some which obliged her to have recourse to Him for His special assistance to enable her to bear them. "Though I was refused those which I asked for," she says, "I received others which I did not expect, and which were so opposed to my own inclination that I was forced to say to my good Master, owing to the violence I was obliged to do to myself, "Do Thou, O Lord, come to my assistance, for it is Thou Who art the cause of this." He did so, and said to me, "Acknowledge, then, that you can do nothing without Me. My assistance shall never be wanting to

you, provided that you always keep your own nothingness and weakness buried in My strength." .

One of these occasions of mortifying herself, and which appeared beyond her strength, is mentioned in particular by Margaret Mary. The matter appears trifling in itself, but it involved under the circumstances so great an act of self-denial, that it led, by the conquest which she gained over herself, to her receiving extraordinary graces from our Lord. Margaret Mary had, in common with all her family, so strong a natural antipathy to cheese, that her brother had made it a condition upon her entering the convent, before signing the contract, that she should never be required to eat it. To this of course no difficulty was made. Now, however, she was attacked upon this point as a mark of singularity. Our Lord perhaps wished to test in this manner the strength of her love, and to manifest at the same time the truth of those singular graces He bestowed upon her by enabling her for the love of Him to triumph over this strong natural repugnance. She was pressed so strongly on this point that she did not know what to do. We may judge how strong on the other hand was the natural antipathy against which she had to contend by the expressions she uses regarding it. "On the one hand," she says, "it seemed to me that the sacrifice of my life would have been a thousand times easier than to do this, and had I not cherished my vocation dearer than my life, I would rather have abandoned it than make up my mind to do what was required of me. On the other hand, I felt that my Sovereign Lord wished this sacrifice of me, for on it depended so many others."

She was engaged in this struggle for three days ; and it was so violent as to excite the compassion of all who witnessed it, and especially of her Mistress. She presented herself before her Mistress to do what was required of her, when her courage failed, and she was ready to die of grief to think that she was not able to overcome this natural aversion. "Alas!" she said to her Mistress, "would that I might rather lose my life than fail in obedience!" On this her Mistress sent her away, telling her that she was not worthy to practise this act of obedience, and that she should not be allowed now to do what had been ordered. "This was enough for me," she remarks, "and I said at once, I must either conquer or die." She then went before the Blessed Sacrament, her ordinary recourse in her difficulties, and remained there three or four hours, weeping and groaning, in order that she might obtain strength to overcome herself. "Alas, my God!" she said, "hast Thou abandoned me? Must there, then, be any reserve in my sacrifice, and shall not all be consumed as a perfect holocaust?" "My Divine Master," she says, "wishing to test to the utmost the fidelity of my love towards Him, as He afterwards gave me to understand, took pleasure in seeing divine love combat in His unworthy slave against the repugnance of nature. But love at last was victorious ; for without any other consolation or arms than these words, 'There must be no reserve in love,' I went and cast myself on my knees before my Mistress, begging of her in mercy to allow me to do what she had desired of me. At length I did it, though I have never felt such repugnance to anything, and this recommenced every time

that I had to do it. This continued for about eight years."

This sacrifice was followed by such overflowing graces that she was often obliged to exclaim, "Stop, O my God, this torrent in which I am lost, or give me greater power to support it!" "I omit to mention here," she says, "all the profusion of divine grace with which I was visited, for it was so great that I could not express it."

Margaret Mary had to conquer herself on another point on which she was exposed to difficulty from her natural warmth of heart. She had passed some months of her Noviceship without being able to detach herself from a particular affection which she entertained for one of the Community, and which placed considerable hindrance in the way of those graces which our Lord designed to confer upon her. She was reprov'd for this several times by our Lord, and she had not yet been induced to correct it. One evening, as she was at prayer, He reproached her, saying that He did not wish for a divided heart, and that if she did not withdraw from creatures, He would withdraw from her. She felt this reproach so keenly, that she took the final resolution of correcting herself, and earnestly begged of our Lord to give her the power of loving only Him.

Our Lord, after manifesting to her her weakness, disclosed to her the source whence she was to derive all her strength. Thus, taught by her own experience, she was better able to lead others to have recourse in all their difficulties to His Sacred Heart.

On one occasion, as she felt a difficulty in submitting herself, our Lord showed her His Sacred Body;

covered with Wounds which He had suffered for love of her, and reproached her with her ingratitude and cowardice in not overcoming herself for love of Him. "What wouldst Thou have me do, O my God?" she said; "my will is stronger than myself." Our Lord told her that if she placed it in the Wound of His Sacred Side she would no longer find any difficulty in overcoming herself. "Place it there then, O my Saviour," she replied, "and enclose it there so securely that it may never more escape from thence." She declared that from that moment everything appeared to her so easy that she had no longer any difficulty in overcoming herself.

Besides giving her His Heart as a source of strength, our Lord would also lead her to It as an oratory in which she might find recollection of soul and a secret charm which would deprive all worldly objects of their attraction; as a place of refuge also in which she might be secure against the disturbance of the world. He often told her that she should make an interior solitude in her heart, where He wished that she should faithfully bear Him company, and where He would teach her to love Him. She could no longer find any pleasure, she tells us, but in this sweet converse with our Lord, and whatever was the occupation she was engaged in, nothing could disturb the loving repose she found in God, Who was alone all-sufficient for her.

This grace manifested its divine origin by the humility with which it inspired her. She saw in her own actions only infidelity, ingratitude, abuse of graces, and loss of time; though her Sisters who

lived with her formed a very different judgment of them.\*

Together with the graces which our Lord communicated to her for herself, He began to prepare her also for the office for which He destined her, of making reparation for others. One day, whilst making her

\* The following are the depositions made by some of the Sisters in the juridical process in 1715. Sister Catherine Augustine Marest said that, "having known the Venerable Margaret Mary before she took the holy habit of Religion, she observed in her, even whilst she was yet in the world, a modesty and recollection, a great desire of giving herself to God, and other virtues suited to a good Religious. Her zeal increased the longer she lived in Religion ; she was always one of the first at the Divine Office, the Community exercises, and the employments in which she was engaged by obedience." Sister Jane Mary Contois adds that she saw her at her entrance into the Noviceship. She manifested, she says, an extraordinary joy and fervour. Her Mistress, observing this, tried her in preference to others with many mortifications and humiliations, which she received without reply or excuse, wearing always a happy and cheerful look. Sister Anne Alexis de Maréchalles observed that the Venerable Margaret Mary manifested a strong attachment to the regular exercises of the Community, and arranged her time, as far as she could, so as to spend it before the Blessed Sacrament, for which she had an extraordinary love. She endeavoured to secure the happiness of receiving It as often as she could. When any of the Sisters happened to be absent in their regular turn, the Mother Superior always appointed Sister Alacoque to take their place, knowing her to be always ready to receive Holy Communion. Though often ill, she did all in her power, on the days on which she was to communicate, to avoid taking anything, in order that she might not be prevented receiving her Divine Master. This desire of receiving Him made her so attentive to lead a pure life that she watched herself in the smallest particulars. She joined little in conversation, except when it turned on God, or some very edifying subject. If the subject changed she showed a particular tact in bringing it back upon God, and she spoke with such readiness and unction that all who heard her derived the greatest edification.

thanksgiving after Holy Communion, and desiring to do something for God, our Lord asked her interiorly if she would not be happy to suffer all the pains which sinners deserved, in order that He might be glorified in so many souls. "Upon this I offered Him," she says, "my soul and my whole being in sacrifice to do His Divine will. Even though these pains were to last to the day of judgment I should be content, provided He were glorified thereby."

Our Lord explained Himself still more clearly to her on the following occasion, in which He set before her the work of charity which He designed her to fulfil. Whilst at prayer one evening, as she begged of Him to let her know what means she had of satisfying her desire of loving Him, our Lord gave her to understand that she could not better testify her love than by loving her neighbour for the love of Him. He taught her that she should employ herself in procuring the salvation of sinners and that of her Sisters, though herself the most miserable of all, and that she should forget her own interests for theirs in all that she had it in her power to do. He explained to her that it was the re-establishment of charity in hearts that He asked for; for it was by failing in it that they had separated themselves from Him who is charity itself; that both Religious persons and persons in the world feared not, by their faults, to wound charity, that divine virtue, which takes its rise in the Heart of God Himself. "It is these members," He added, "already half corrupted and ready to be cut off, which cause Me such great pain. They would already," He said, "have received their punishment, were it not for the

devotion they have towards My holy Mother, who appeases My offended justice, which can only be satisfied by the sacrifice of a victim." "I was touched by this so powerfully," she says, "that I would gladly have accepted every kind of torment, even the pains of purgatory to the day of judgment, to satisfy His goodness." "But let me know, O my God," she said to Him, "what it is that has offended Thy justice." He told her that it was sins, hidden indeed from the eyes of creatures, but which could not be hidden from His. He gave her to understand afterwards that He was greatly pleased with the care and pains which Superiors took for the re-establishment of charity in their Community, and that it should not go unrewarded; but that, if there were no amendment, His mercy would withdraw itself to leave His justice to act, for charity is the character and true spirit of the Daughters of St. Francis of Sales.

Her holy Founder also encouraged her to undertake the work of charity designed for her. It seemed to her that she saw him saying to our Divine Lord that he would wish to be able to do penance even to the day of judgment for all his Daughters.

To animate her the more with the spirit of charity which she was to draw from His Sacred Heart, our Lord continued to strengthen her love of prayer. The attraction she felt for it increased every day, and she gave to it every moment she could command. As our Lord had already raised her to so high a prayer that she was in a manner absorbed in the thought of Him, the devil, who understands well the value of the union of the soul with God, did not fail to endeavour



to disturb her in it, by his subtle fallacies and false suggestions. He endeavoured to persuade her that she was losing her time in it, because, unable often to apply her thoughts to the subject she had proposed to herself, she felt her heart lost, as it were, in the presence of God, without any other movement or affection but that of loving, with a great desire of suffering something for the love of Him. The following expressions into which she would break forth may serve to represent to us the prevailing disposition of her soul in prayer. "It is enough for me, my Beloved," she would say, "to be as Thou desirest." At other times, "O how beautiful is the Beloved of my soul! why cannot I love Him?" She was unable to pray in any other way because, as we have seen, our Lord would be Himself her Master, and had raised her to this high kind of prayer, which would seem to be what is described by St. Teresa as the prayer of Quiet, or of Union. We are not to understand from this that those who are desirous of advancing in the practice of prayer should not be careful in preparing the subject of their prayer, and faithful in keeping to it. It is for them to be faithful to such points on their parts, and to leave it to Almighty God to bestow upon them such gifts in prayer as He shall be pleased to favour them with.

Margaret Mary found her delight in this union with God. "There was no time," she says, "more agreeable to me than the night, as being the best suited to converse with my Beloved. I therefore begged of my good Angel sometimes to awaken me. At these times I felt my heart wholly filled with God, whose converse was so sweet to me that I often passed three hours with-

out any other movement or sentiment but that of love, and without its being in my power to fall asleep again."

Our Lord would have her join bodily mortification with the sweets of prayer. "I could not rest on my left side," she says, "as I was unable in that position to breathe. On one occasion, when I wished to turn to relieve my shoulder, which gave me pain, He told me that when He carried His cross He did not change it from side to side, in order to find relief. By this I understood that he wished me to retrench every kind of comfort."

As the time of her Profession approached, Margaret Mary was attacked anew on the subject of the extraordinary graces she received, and her manner of prayer. She was told that it was evident she was unsuited to the Order of the Visitation, the spirit of which was averse to such extraordinary ways, so liable to illusions. "I represented to my Sovereign Lord," she says, "these reproaches which I received, and made my complaint to Him, saying: 'Wilt Thou, then, O Lord, be the cause of my being sent away?' I received from Him the following reply: 'Tell your Mother Superior,' He said, 'that she has nothing to fear in receiving you, and that it is I who give her this assurance.'" On her reporting this to her Mother Superior, she ordered her to ask of our Lord, in proof of His will, to make her useful to the Order by an exact observance of all its rules. "Upon this, His loving goodness replied to me," she says: "'Well, My Daughter, I grant you what you ask. I will make you more useful to the Order than they suppose, but in a manner which as yet is known only to Me, and from henceforth I will adapt My graces to

the spirit of your Rule, to the will of your Superiors, and to your own weakness; so that you may look with suspicion upon anything which withdraws you from the exact observance of your Rule, which I would have you prefer to all else. Moreover, I am content that you prefer the will of your Superiors to Mine, when they forbid you to do what I have ordered you. Leave them to do what they please with you. I shall know how to make My designs succeed even by the very means which seem opposed to them. I reserve to Myself the conduct of your interior, and especially of your heart, in which I have established the reign of My pure love, and I will never resign it to another.'"

The Mother Superior and the Mistress of Novices expressed their satisfaction, and the effects they witnessed in Margaret Mary left them no doubt of the truth of the communication. "I attached myself then wholly," says Margaret Mary, "to the practice of obedience, with great interior peace, whatever it cost me to obey."

Her obedience, humility, and mortification, won for her the esteem of all; and it was by the unanimous votes of the Community that she was judged worthy to be admitted to her holy Profession. But so closely was her heart united to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and so wholly was she absorbed in the thought of God, that the esteem with which she was regarded was a source of suffering to her from the knowledge she had of herself. "The esteem which they manifested towards me," she says, "and the regard in which I was held, were an insupportable martyrdom to me. I looked upon them as a just punishment of my sins, which

appeared to me so great that every imaginable torment would have seemed light to me for the expiation of them, and to make satisfaction to the divine justice."

Four days before her Profession, November 2nd, 1672, as she was praying to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and expressing her desire to make Him amends for the manner in which she had abused His graces, both in the sacraments and in prayer, she made an entire sacrifice of herself to His divine will, begging Him to receive it as a holocaust and to unite it to the Sacrifice He had made of Himself to His Eternal Father. Our Lord replied to her: "Remember that it is a crucified God whom you wish to espouse; you must therefore make yourself like to Him, and bid adieu to all the pleasures of life, for there will be no longer any for you but such as are marked with the Cross." As she regarded our Divine Lord upon the Cross, He told her to fasten herself to the cross which He should give her, and that it should be so heavy a one, that were she not supported by His almighty arm it would be impossible for her to bear it.

She had constant opportunities of putting in practice the sacrifice of herself; for as she was continually united with God in prayer, no occasion was lost of humbling her, in order that it might appear clearly by the application of this sure test that her extraordinary gifts really came from God.

In the enclosure adjoining the kitchen-garden of the monastery was kept an ass with her foal. The Novices had received instructions to see that these animals did not make their way into the garden. Margaret Mary, in the simplicity of her fervent obedience, regarded this

instruction as addressed personally to herself, and never failed to be at her post except when engaged in the choir. Her charge, as may be supposed, kept her in constant exercise throughout the day. The time for her Retreat before her Profession having come, she thought, as she had received no instructions to the contrary, that she still ought to continue her charge; and her Superiors, in secret admiration of her uninterrupted union with God, and desirous of seeing how far her obedience would carry her, allowed her to take her own way. She appeared as recollected whilst employed in this exercise as in the time of prayer. One day, we are told, as she was going to break off the converse with our Divine Lord with which He was favouring her, in order to attend to her charge, He said to her, "Leave them alone, they will do no harm;" and, though the animals were seen by the Community loose in the garden, upon examination of the ground no trace of any injury could be discovered.

She was desired by her Mother Superior, at a later period of her life, to give an account in writing of the reflections she had made during this time, and of the graces she had received from our Lord. "My Divine Master," she says, "kept me faithful company during the time that I was obliged to be unceasingly on the move. During this time I received such great graces that I had never before received any like them, especially regarding the mystery of His Passion. But I omit all, it being too long to write. I will only say that it is this which has given me so great a love of the Cross that I cannot live a moment without suffering, suffering in silence without consolation or relief, and

dying with the Sovereign Lord of my soul. This has continued during my whole life, which by His mercy has passed in exercises of this kind ; that is to say, in the exercise of pure love. He has always taken such care to furnish me abundantly with this food, so delightful to His taste, that He never says, 'It is enough.' In the evenings, though greatly fatigued and wearied, I enjoyed such peace, that my only uneasiness was lest I should not love my God enough. I passed the whole night in such thoughts."

The following are the resolutions which Margaret Mary made during this Retreat, and which she says were dictated to her by our Lord Himself. They were to form the dispositions in which she was to make her holy Profession, and were to serve as the rule of all her life. We see by them how she was directed by our Lord to His Sacred Heart as the source of her strength, and of those sentiments by which she was to live His life. "After I had received my Beloved," she says, "into my heart, He said to me, 'Behold the Wound in My Side, wherein you are to make your abode both now and for ever. Here you will be able to preserve the robe of innocence with which I have clothed you, in order that you may live from henceforth the life of a Man-God. Live as no longer living, in order that I may live perfectly in you. Think of your body, and of all that may befall it, as though it existed no longer. Act as if you no longer acted, but I alone in you. To this end all your powers and senses must be buried in Me. You must be deaf, dumb, blind, and insensible to all earthly objects. You must will as no longer willing ; you must be without judgment, desire, affec-

tion, or any other will but that of My good pleasure, which should form all your delight. Seek nothing out of Me unless you would do injury to My power, and offend Me grievously, since I wish to be all to you.

“‘Be ever ready to receive Me; I shall always be ready to give Myself to you. You will often be delivered to the fury of your enemies; but fear nothing. I will encompass you with My power, and will be Myself the reward of your victories. Be careful never to regard yourself out of Me. Let your motto be, “To love and suffer blindly.” “One only heart, one only love, one God alone.”’”

Margaret Mary added in her own blood: “I, a poor miserable nothing, protest to my God that I will offer and sacrifice myself to all that He asks of me, offering my heart wholly to the accomplishment of His good pleasure, without regard to any other interest than that of His greater glory and His pure love. To this I consecrate and give my whole being and every moment of my life. I belong for ever to my Beloved, as His slave, His handmaid, and His creature. He is wholly mine, and I am His unworthy Spouse, Sister Margaret Mary, dead henceforth to the world. Wholly from God, and nothing from myself; wholly to God, and nothing to myself; wholly for God, and nothing for myself.”

It was in these sentiments that Margaret Mary made her Profession on the 6th of November, 1672. “On this day,” she says, “my Divine Lord was pleased to receive me as His Spouse in a manner I am unable to express. I will only say that He treated me as a

Spouse of Thabor.\* And yet I felt this harder on the other hand than death, seeing in myself no resemblance to my Spouse, whom I beheld all disfigured and torn upon Calvary. But He said to me, 'Leave Me to act; everything has its time. I would have you at present the sport of My love. You are to abandon yourself wholly to My will, blindly and without resistance, allowing Me to execute My good pleasure at your expense. But you will lose nothing thereby.' He promised that He would never leave me. 'Be ever ready,' He said, 'to receive Me, for henceforth I will make My abode in you, and will converse and entertain Myself with you.'" Our Lord allowed her to enjoy continually His divine presence, "in a manner," she says, "which I had never before experienced. I have never received so great a grace, if I am to judge by the effects which it has ever since produced in me. I perceived Him quite close to me, and heard His voice much better than if it had been by the bodily senses. For in that case I could have distracted myself had I pleased; but as it was, I could not place any hindrance in the way of this impression, which I had no share in producing in myself."

This interior Vision of our Blessed Lord with which

\* Although our Lord favoured Margaret Mary with so much sweetness on the day of her Profession, He did not however leave her, even on this occasion, without some taste of the Cross. In her writings we find the following account:—"Ever since I have had the happiness of being the Spouse of a crucified God, I never remember to have been without the livery of the Cross which I love so much, beginning with the day of my Profession, on which I received a cross which I felt very sensibly, according to nature; but I declare that I can never sufficiently admire the goodness of my God."



Margaret Mary was favoured appears to be of that kind which is described by St. Teresa as one of the most sublime, and one in which, as she was assured by St. Peter of Alcantara, the devil has the least power of taking any part. "It seemed to me," she says in describing it, "that our Lord was constantly at my side; though, as there was no image, I could not distinguish Him under any form. But I felt clearly that He was constantly at my side on my right hand, and that He was witness of all I did. So that whenever I recollected myself a little, or was not altogether distracted, I could not but know that He was close to me. I did not indeed see anything," she says, "either with the eyes of my body or those of my soul; but it seemed to me that our Lord was close to me, and I knew, as it seemed to me, that it was He Himself who had spoken to me on other occasions. The soul knows," as she further explains it, "what is presented to her by a light brighter than that of the sun. I do not say that one sees either the sun or any particular brightness, but it is a light without light, which illumines the understanding and renders it capable of enjoying so great a good, which is attended by so many others." She distinguishes the knowledge given by this interior Vision from that sense of the presence of God which she says is not unfrequently felt by persons who are favoured with the prayer of Quiet and Union, and by which, as soon as they enter on prayer, they seem to find Him with whom they wish to converse. In that the soul is assured of the presence of God only by the interior effects which His graces produce within her; but here the soul knows clearly, as she describes it,

that Jesus Christ, the son of the Blessed Virgin, is present. "In the former manner of prayer," she says, "the soul simply feels and receives some influence of the Divinity, here she moreover sees that the most sacred Humanity of our Lord holds her company, and condescends at the same time to favour her with His graces."

"This divine presence," says Margaret Mary, describing the effects produced upon her by this interior Vision, "impressed me with so deep a sense of self-annihilation that I felt, as it were, sunk in the abyss of my nothingness, from which I have never since been able to escape. Penetrated with respect for His infinite majesty, my own inclination would have led me to remain constantly prostrate on my face before Him, or on my knees; and, indeed, I always took this position as far as my occupations and my weakness allowed me. His divine majesty never left me any rest in any less respectful position, so that I never dared to remain seated when alone. He impressed me with so lively a sense of my own unworthiness that I no longer cared to appear in public; when I did so, I felt a strange confusion. I should have desired no one any longer to think of me, except to despise and humble me, and speak injuriously of me, for in fact I deserved nothing else. The only Love of my soul took such pleasure in seeing me thus treated, that in spite of my natural sensibility, which arose from my proud character, He no longer allowed me to find any pleasure amongst creatures, except in occasions of humiliation, contradiction, and abjection. He wished that this should be my most delightful food, and He has never allowed

me to be without it. He supplied me with it Himself when I failed to receive it from creatures, and when He did so it was in a way which I felt much more keenly. It would take me too long to explain myself further."

## CHAPTER VIII.

1672.

AT the time that Margaret Mary made her Profession, the Monastery of Paray was no longer governed by the Mother Margaret Jeronima Hersant. She had been succeeded in 1672 by the Mother Mary Frances de Saumaise, Professed of Dijon. This admirable Mother Superior, whose name is so closely connected with the graces bestowed upon Blessed Margaret Mary in the revelation and promotion of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, gave indications from her earliest years of the virtues with which she was to be endowed. Born at Dijon, of good family, she was placed under the care of the Sisters of the Visitation, when about eleven or twelve years of age. She then took the "little habit," \* which she quitted at the age of fifteen to enter the Noviciate, and in the following year she made her

\* St. Frances of Sales allowed a small number of young persons, of the age of ten or twelve, who gave indications of an inclination to the religious state, to be received at the wish of their parents into the monasteries of his Order. They were to wear, at the will of the Mother Superior, a plain black dress, with a short white veil, and to be formed to spiritual things, according to their capacity, by a Sister of great gentleness and prudence. At the age of fifteen they were to be received, if fitted for it, to their Clothing, otherwise they were to be removed. "However, those Houses will do very well," remarks the holy Founder, "who can exempt themselves from receiving any."

Profession. St. Jane Frances de Chantal, in her last passage through Dijon, took notice of the young Professed, and expressed a wish to speak with her in private. She remarked in her a prudence and maturity of judgment above her years, and predicted that she would prove one day a valuable Superior of the Order. She verified the prediction of the sainted Foundress, and the Monastery of Paray was the first to experience it, receiving her as Mother Superior in the year 1672.

Margaret Mary had been now a Novice for nine months, and Mother Mary Frances was unwilling to trust her own unaided judgment in deciding upon her remarkable vocation. Before admitting her to Profession she thought it best to take the opinion of Mother Anne Seraphine Boulier, whose merit was generally recognised in the Order, upon the extraordinary circumstances of the case. Mother Anne Seraphine, signally favoured herself by our Lord, had no difficulty in satisfying the mind of the worthy Mother Superior, and inspiring her with a high esteem for the privileged soul our Lord had committed to her care. Two years later, when the still more extraordinary graces which Margaret Mary received rendered further examination necessary, Mother de Saumaise had the advantage of the prudent counsel of Fr. de La Colombière to guide her, and from that time these three privileged souls contracted an intimate union in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Mother de Saumaise, after her six years of Superiority at Paray, returned to Dijon, where she was appointed Mistress of Novices. After filling that office for a year she was chosen Mother Superior of the Monastery

at Moulins. Her health required her recall to her own monastery at the end of three years, but she had taken advantage of her stay at Moulins to establish there the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Margaret Mary maintained an intimate correspondence by letter with her friend and former Superior, who seconded her warmly in her efforts to extend the Devotion, and there is good reason to believe that she received from the Sacred Heart a lasting reward of her pious zeal. Blessed Margaret Mary was once shown in a vision twelve bright stars, which were to form for ever a crown for the Sacred Heart, and Mother Mary Frances was of the number.

Margaret Mary gave her confidence at once to her new Superior, and was treated by her in return with the true spiritual affection of a Mother. Observing in her an extraordinary love for our Blessed Lord, she co-operated with the action of divine grace, and gave her opportunities of satisfying her desire of suffering in imitation of Him. The Community witnessed with admiration the fidelity with which Margaret Mary corresponded to the abundant graces she received, and the exactness with which she carried out the injunctions of her holy Institute. She was especially distinguished, we are told by her contemporaries, by her obedience, silence, severity towards herself, simplicity, and religious poverty, which led her to conform herself, in spite of her delicate health, to the ordinary rule in respect of food and clothing, without ever complaining of what was given her for her use.

She was engaged by obedience in the various employments which form the occupations of religious life.

In each she made use of her good qualities with her usual fervour, and in each she met, as may be supposed, with many opportunities of mortification and humiliation. She was placed first as assistant in the Infirmary, which was under the charge of Sister Catherine Augustine Marest. This good and devoted Sister, full of energy both of body and mind, intrepid and indefatigable in the exercise of her charge, found a contrast in the calm and gentle sweetness and humility of Margaret Mary, constantly absorbed in the presence of God. It may be easily understood how many opportunities such a diversity of character would afford for the exercise of virtue on either side. In this, as in every other office in which obedience placed her, Margaret Mary ever took to herself whatever was most mortifying to nature. When employed in charge of the Store-room she set apart for herself what she would not have thought of offering to any one else. She had much to suffer, both from the laborious nature of her employment, in which she was unwilling ever to have any assistance, and also from not finding others as fervent or as indefatigable as herself.

She was several times Mistress of the children who were trained in the monastery. She was, as may be supposed, greatly beloved by them, for she endeavoured to gain their hearts, in order to lead them to a love of the Sacred Heart of our Lord. She instilled into their minds solid principles of virtue, teaching them to act in all things from the love of God, and for no consideration whatever to consent to commit a sin. She readily pardoned them any faults they might commit, with the exception of falsehood and particular attach-

ments. These she punished severely. She took occasion to mortify herself in attending upon the children. She would collect for herself the pieces of bread which they left about, and would often mix water with her food, in order to make it more insipid, and in hot weather would drink warm water. She would commonly deprive herself of fresh fruit, and would eat the good and bad alike. Those who were in office with her declare that the only subject of dispute they ever had with her was to prevent her undertaking what was most troublesome and mortifying.

Indeed, she seemed to carry mortification throughout everything, and she derived from it that true life which springs from it in its perfection. She regarded sickness and health alike as a gift from Almighty God, and dying to the pleasures of sense, she found a delight in sufferings and humiliation, because they united her more closely to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and enabled her to live His life.

The love of our Blessed Lord which she derived from this mortification of herself showed itself in charity towards her neighbour. She was as gentle and forbearing towards others as she was severe towards herself. She would excuse them in such a manner as to convince them that she would gladly endure anything for them. Whatever mortification she had to endure from them, she was never heard to murmur or complain, but was ever ready to render any service to those who brought the mortification upon her. This charity she drew from the Sacred Heart of our Lord. She would frequently say, "I do not understand how a Spouse of Jesus Christ crucified can fly from the Cross, and not rather



love it ; for in flying from it she flies, at the same time, from Him who bore it for love of us, and regarded it as the object of His delight. We can love Him only as far as we love the Cross."

The more closely the soul attains to union with Almighty God, the less need does it feel of those external aids which helped it to this union. Margaret Mary had formerly taken great delight in spiritual reading. Now, on the contrary, it became a kind of torment to her. She could not apply her mind to it, for her thoughts were wholly absorbed in the consideration of our Blessed Lord, Whom she beheld present in the various mysteries of His life. All other objects alike failed to engage her attention, for all her thoughts were taken up with our Lord. The day did not appear long enough to converse with God ; hence her desire was to remain in silence, or if she had to speak she could speak only of God. All other conversation was a torture to her. "From being a great talker," she said, "I have become so ignorant that I know nothing, and do not desire to know anything but Jesus crucified." In this intimate converse with which our Lord favoured her, He would speak with her at one time as a friend, at another as her Spouse, or as a Father with a beloved child.

But she was not to receive these graces only for herself. She was to serve as a channel to communicate them to others, and it was through suffering that she was to communicate them. Hence our Lord prepared her for the sufferings she was to endure for others by allowing her on one occasion to behold in Himself a two-fold sanctity, one of love and the other

of justice. Both were most rigorous in their character, and both were to exert their influence continually upon her. The first, she was told, would make her suffer a kind of purgatory, most painful to bear, in order to relieve the holy souls in purgatory, who would be allowed to address themselves to her according to His good pleasure. The sanctity of justice, so terrible to sinners, she was to feel in suffering for sinners, "especially," said our Lord, "for souls consecrated to Me." "I will make you see and feel hereafter," He said, "what you must suffer for My love in this manner." We shall have occasion to see in Margaret Mary's life, and in one striking instance in particular, how this promise of our Lord was fulfilled.

## CHAPTER IX.

1672—1673.

THE consolations with which Margaret Mary was favoured were given her, as we have seen, to prepare her for suffering. In order that she might be still better prepared, our Lord inspired her with a great desire of suffering. This led her to ask Him one day, as she tells us, why it was that He left her constantly without suffering. Upon this she was shown a great cross covered with flowers. "Behold," our Lord said to her, "the couch of My chaste Spouses. It is upon this that the fire of My pure love shall consume your sacrifice. By degrees these flowers will fall away, and there will remain only the thorns which, out of regard to your weakness, are at present hidden by these flowers. But one day you shall feel their points so keenly, that you will have need of all the strength of My love to enable you to bear the pain."

We may judge of the true love of Margaret Mary for our Blessed Lord by the joy which this announcement gave her. "These words rejoiced me," she says, "as I thought I should never have enough suffering, humiliation, and contempt, to slake the burning thirst which I had for them. It seemed to me that I could never find a greater suffering than that which I felt in not suffering." The soul must have attained to a great

love of our Blessed Lord when it desires, in order to resemble Him, to suffer without consolation. "I wished," says Margaret Mary, "to have the cross, and the cross alone. I could have wished to see my body overwhelmed with austerities and labour. I took upon me as much as my strength could bear. I could not live a moment without suffering."

The sanctity of love which had been shown to her enkindled in her the desire of suffering, and led her to suffer for the suffering souls in purgatory. It enkindled, besides the desire of suffering, two other desires which constantly tormented her; one of Holy Communion, and the other of dying in order to be united to God. "I have so great a desire," she says, "of Holy Communion that had I to walk barefoot over flames it seems to me that it would cost me nothing compared to the loss of this happiness."

It was the presence of our Blessed Lord which, as we have seen, she constantly enjoyed, that formed the secret of her strength, and enabled her to find her joy in suffering. It was this that made her happy everywhere. "Since our Lord has conferred upon me the grace," she says, "of constantly enjoying His presence, I have felt indifferent to every arrangement which might be made concerning me. For I felt persuaded that since God had given Himself to me through the effect of His goodness, without any merit on my part, nothing could take Him from me. It was this thought that made me happy wherever I was."

Margaret Mary was favoured, also, with a visit from her holy Founder, and instructed by him regarding the true character and spirit of his Institute, and was shown

also some of the defects in the Community for which she was later to make reparation. He appeared to her shortly before his Feast (January 29), about three months after her Profession. "He showed me," she says, "during my prayer that the virtues which he had always most desired for his Daughters were those by which he had been himself most closely united to God, namely, charity towards God and our neighbour, and the most profound humility. They had fallen, he said, both from one and the other; from charity towards God by regarding only creatures in their actions and seeking only their approbation, regardless meanwhile that they were in bad odour before God, and that by particular friendships they destroyed both charity and silence. As regards humility there was a want, he said, of keeping themselves within themselves, in order to watch over their own defects; and they judged ill of the intentions of their neighbours on the slightest grounds. 'This gives me great pain,' he said, 'seeing that they resist grace and the means which God gives them for a perfect amendment.' It was by a spirit of amiable-severity and constant vigilance that all these defects were to be repaired. 'I will come,' he added, 'on the day of my Feast to choose my true Daughters, who possess my true spirit. I will write them in my heart, and offer them constantly to the Divine Majesty, in the odour of sweetness, to supply for the imperfect.'"

In order to enjoy the company of our Divine Lord in that Mystery of Love, which He instituted in order to satisfy His desire of remaining constantly in the midst of us, Margaret Mary spent every moment that she could before the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord

urged her so strongly, she said, to go in search of Him, that if she resisted she felt inexplicable suffering. It was evident that this attraction came from our Lord, for she suffered no less pain whenever she was inclined to remain before the altar at a time that obedience called her elsewhere.

Prayer, however, seemed to be the element, as it were, in which she lived. When obliged to quit it, she felt a pain as if her heart were being torn from her body. She would say then to our Lord, "My Jesus, as I cannot remain longer in Thy presence, do Thou come with me to sanctify all that I do, since all is for Thee."

But our Lord would teach her to practise true liberty of spirit in prayer, and to find a means of practising prayer in the exercise of duties to which she was called by obedience. "Being employed on Easter Sunday," she says, "in a charge\* which prevented my making my prayer with the Community, I was inclined to feel a little annoyance. But I was at once checked for this by my Sovereign Master, who said to me, 'Know, My Daughter, that the prayer of submission and sacrifice is more agreeable to Me than contemplation.'"

To confirm her in this spirit of obedience, she was commanded by our Lord to tell her Mother Superior that He wished her to be singular in nothing but her sufferings; and that He did not wish her to be a stone of offence, for that those who should strike against her would be grievously hurt; "Not for your own sake," she was told, "but on account of My Spirit which dwells within you."

\* This was probably the charge of Assistant Infirmarian, to which she was appointed the first year after her Profession.

At the same time, our Lord was so jealous of her fidelity in following the attraction by which He drew her to Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, that He showed His displeasure at any regulation which tended to keep her from It. She had been told that she should moderate the constant application of her mind to the thought of God, which might otherwise impair her health; that she was not to be more devout than the rest, and that she should not be so constantly before the Blessed Sacrament, where she spent on feast days nearly the whole of the day in prayer. She resolved in consequence to remain on these days in her cell. But she found that it was impossible for her to do so. She resisted for some time the attraction she felt to the Blessed Sacrament; but she was obliged at length to leave her cell and obey the voice of our Lord who called her. On her coming into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, our Lord said to her, in an angry tone, "Know that if you withdraw from My presence, I will make you feel it, as well as those who are the cause of it. I will hide My presence from them, and when they seek Me they shall not find Me."

## CHAPTER X.

1673.

AS it was seen that our Lord continued to favour Margaret Mary with extraordinary gifts and graces, she was desired by the Mother de Saumaise, about six months after her Profession, to put in writing an account of all that passed within her.\* She felt at first great repugnance to do so, but our Lord said to her, "Why do you refuse to obey My voice, and to put in writing what comes from Me, not from yourself? You have no part in it beyond a simple adherence to My will. Consider what you are, and what you deserve, and you will understand whence comes the good which you possess. Why do you fear, since I have given you a place of refuge where all becomes easy?" These words, as may be supposed, gave her great confidence, and inspired her with a great desire to obey. She accordingly wrote as follows. We see from the account how intimately connected are the graces which she received with the Sacred Heart of our Lord.

"To begin," she says; "one day on the eve of Communion, I asked of my Jesus to unite my heart to His, for this was all I aspired to; though indeed I

\* This is a different account from that which Blessed Margaret Mary wrote at the order of her Confessor, Fr. Rolin, S.J.



said to myself, how could it be that nothing should be united to infinite Being. 'I know, O my God,' I said, 'that this divine union can be effected only in Thy love.'" Upon this she was allowed to see, by the highest point of her understanding, His Sacred Heart, brighter than the sun, and as of an immense size. An atom, as it were, dark and shapeless, seemed to be attempting to approach this beauteous light, but in vain. "This loving Heart," she says, "drew it then to Itself, saying, 'Lose thyself in My greatness, and see that thou never come forth from thence. For if thou leave it, thou shall never again enter it.' Since that time," she says, "I have found my heart so bound to prayer, that it seems to me sometimes as though I had no longer the use of it. This is attended with such great peace, that I have no other care but to employ my time in the exercise of His holy love."

"I imagined sometimes," she adds, "that it might be the devil who kept me thus bound." Upon this she asked of our Lord to give her a knowledge of the deceits of the devil, that she might avoid them. He told her that it was impossible for the devil to have a knowledge of the interior unless he obtained it from some exterior sign, and that he cannot possibly give true peace to the heart.

Even though the gift of prayer come from Almighty God, and carry with it an assurance of its divine origin during the time of prayer, this does not exempt the soul from considerable apprehension at other times lest it may be the subject of the illusions of the devil. It can find its security only in obedience to wise direction. Thus St. Teresa, though raised to a high degree of

prayer, felt great alarm lest she might be deceived. "Our Lord gave me," she says, "very commonly the Prayer of Quiet, and often even that of Union, which lasted for a long time. But I began to fear for myself by reason of this extraordinary joy and sweetness which I felt, without having it in my power in general to prevent it; though, on the other hand, I felt within myself a strong assurance that it was from God, especially when I was actually in prayer." This alarm, indeed, increased as she advanced in prayer, and it was only after she had placed herself, as she tells us, under the direction of one of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus that she felt assured that her prayer came from the Spirit of God.

In order to try her fidelity, our Lord would sometimes, as He is wont with faithful souls, withdraw His sensible grace from Margaret Mary, so that she found herself in an utter inability, as it were, to do anything. Upon her complaining on one occasion to our Lord that He allowed her to remain in His presence without doing anything, she heard in reply, "If I would have you in My presence deaf, blind, and dumb, ought you not to be satisfied?" Our Lord would seem to teach her by this that the soul should find her satisfaction in His divine will no less in desolation than in consolation. He wished to convey to her, perhaps, the same lesson when, during a time of recollection for the whole Community, He told her that when He makes His abode in a soul, He would have an understanding without curiosity, a mind devoid of the exercise of its judgment, a judgment uninfluenced by the will, and a heart with no other movement than that of His love.

The same spirit of self-abandonment and dependence upon His holy will was taught her by our Lord through the means of a singular favour she received from Him in the recovery of her voice, which she had lost for some time. "I had been unable," she says, "for a long time to sing the Office. This was no little trouble to me, both on account of the joy which I felt in singing the praises of my God, and also because I regarded this inability as a just punishment of my negligence. At length, on the eve of the Visitation, at Matins, having made several ineffectual efforts to sing the Invitatory, not being able even to follow the choir in the Psalms, at the first verse of the *Te Deum* I felt myself wholly penetrated with a power before which all my own powers bowed themselves, as it were, in a spirit of homage and adoration. As I held my arms crossed in my sleeves a heavenly light rested upon them in the form of a little child, or rather of a brilliant sun. 'My Lord and my God,' I said in silence, 'what an excess of love is this by which Thou thus lowerest Thine infinite greatness?' 'I am come, My Daughter,' He said, 'to ask you why you tell Me so often not to approach you?' 'Thou knowest, O my Lord,' I replied, "that it is because I am not worthy to approach Thee, much less to touch Thee." 'Learn then,' He said, 'that the more you retire into your own nothingness the more does My greatness lower itself to find you.' But fearing that it might be an angel of Satan, I made Him the following request: 'If it be Thou, O my God, enable me then to sing Thy praises.' I immediately felt my voice free and stronger than ever. I joined in the *Te Deum* with the choir, and the rest

of the Matins followed in the same manner, for I did not allow the caresses with which He favoured me to make me less attentive to the Office. I felt my whole soul strongly united to His Divine presence, and employed in honouring Him. At the end He said to me, 'I wished to try the motive which you had in singing My praises. Had you been for a moment less attentive I should have retired.'"

"Having had the use of my voice," she says, "for a considerable time, I lost it again. On begging of our Lord to give it me back, He replied 'that it was not mine; that He had lent it to me in order to oblige me to believe; and that I ought to be equally well pleased either to lose it or possess it.' I have remained since indifferent regarding it, nothing being so profitable to a soul as the most perfect self-abandonment in all respects."

We can only comprehend the love of Jesus Christ in proportion to the knowledge we have of our own nothingness and misery. This knowledge our Blessed Lord chose to give Margaret Mary in the following Vision, in order that she might better understand the "breadth and length and heighth and depth" of His love. It was in the Wound of His Sacred Side that she was to find it.

On one occasion, she says, she seemed as though she were on the brink of a precipice. She could not understand how to explain this, and was greatly troubled at it, and she asked our Lord to explain what it was that thus disquieted her. No sooner was she engaged in prayer than our Lord presented Himself to her, and told her to look upon the opening in His Sacred Side.

This, He told her, was an unfathomable abyss opened by a shaft of unmeasurable length, which was that of His love. If she wished to escape the abyss which terrified her she must plunge herself into this abyss of His Side, in which He had provided an escape from every other abyss. This, He told her, was the dwelling-place of those who love Him; that they find in it two lives, one for the soul and the other for the heart. The soul finds there the source of living waters to purify, and to impart to it the life of grace, of which it had been deprived by sin. The heart finds there a furnace of love which allows it no longer to live any life but a life of love. The one sanctifies itself there, the other consumes itself. But since the opening is very narrow, it is necessary to be little and stripped of all things in order to find an entrance into it.

It was perhaps from the instruction which Margaret Mary received in this Vision that she derived that advice which she gave later to her Novices, to bury the abyss of every misery which they found in themselves in the abyss of love in the Sacred Heart of our Lord. "The Heart of Jesus," she told them, "is an abyss where you will find all. It is especially an abyss of love in which we should lose every other love, especially the self-love which is in us, with its evil fruits, such as human respect, and the desire of raising ourselves above others and following our own inclinations. It is by burying these inclinations in the abyss of divine love that you will find all the riches which are necessary for you, according to the different states in which you may be.

"If you are in an abyss of privation and desolation, this Divine Heart is an abyss of every consolation, in

which we should lose ourselves without desiring, however, to taste its sweetness.

“If you are in an abyss of dryness and powerlessness, go and bury yourself in the Heart of Jesus Christ, which is an abyss of power and love, without being over-anxious, however, to taste the sweetness of this love, except when it shall please Him.

“If you are in an abyss of poverty, and stripped of everything, bury yourself in the Heart of Jesus. It is filled with treasures, with which It will enrich you, if you allow It to do so.

“If you are in an abyss of weakness, relapses, and misery, go frequently to the Heart of Jesus. It is an abyss of mercy and strength, and will raise you up and strengthen you.

“If you experience in yourself an abyss of pride and vain self-esteem, bury it at once in the deep self-annihilation of the Heart of Jesus. This humble Heart is an abyss of humility.

“If you are in an abyss of ignorance and darkness, the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of light and knowledge. Learn from It above all things to love It, and to do only what It desires of you.

“If you are in an abyss of infidelity and inconstancy, the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of constancy and fidelity. Bury yourself in It, and you will find there a love which constantly loves you and seeks your good.

“If you are, as it were, buried in death, go to the Heart of Jesus. You will find there an abyss of life, and draw from It a new life, in which you will no longer see but with the eyes of Jesus Christ, no longer act but

by His movement, no longer speak but with His tongue, and no longer love but with His Heart.

“If you find yourself in an abyss of ingratitude, the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of gratitude. Draw from It whatever you wish to offer to God for all the blessings you have received from Him, and beg of Jesus to supply for you out of His abundance.

“If you are in an abyss of agitation, impatience, or anger, go to the Heart of Jesus. It is an abyss of gentleness.

“If you are in an abyss of dissipation and distraction, you will find in the Sacred Heart of Jesus an abyss of recollection and fervour which will supply for all, and fix your heart and imagination by uniting them to Him.

“If you feel plunged in an abyss of sadness, bury this sadness itself in the Heart of Jesus. It is an abyss of heavenly joy, and the treasure of delight to Saints and Angels.

“If you are in trouble and disquietude, the Divine Heart is an abyss of peace, and this peace It will impart to you.

“When you are in an abyss of bitterness and suffering, unite them to the abyss of the infinite sufferings of the Heart of Jesus, and you will learn of Him to suffer and to be happy in suffering.

“When you are in an abyss of fear, the Heart of Jesus is an abyss of confidence and love. Abandon yourself to It, and you will learn that fear should give place to love.

“In fine, in everything and on all occasions, plunge yourself in this ocean of love and charity, and, if possible, do not quit It until, like iron in the furnace,

or as a sponge plunged in the sea and penetrated with its waters, you are penetrated with the fire with which this Heart is burning for God and men."

Margaret Mary had been told, as we have seen, by her Mistress, on her first entrance into the Noviceship, to present herself before our Lord in prayer as a blank canvas before a painter. Our Lord had Himself explained to her that her soul was the canvas on which He designed to trace a copy of His life, which had been passed in love and sacrifice. He now renewed this instruction to her. "He told me," she says, "that my heart was a living tablet, upon which He designed to paint a living picture." This was to cause her pain ; for the practice of mortification, which the imitation of our Lord supposes, cannot but be painful to nature, but this pain itself was to have in it more that was agreeable than painful. For what is painful in itself is sweetened by the thought of the love of our Blessed Lord. And hence Margaret Mary remarks : "It is true that since that time I have had no thirst for humiliations and mortifications, or anything else, which has not had more of sweetness in it than bitterness."

As the sense which the Saints have of their absolute dependence on Almighty God increases in proportion to their love of Him, so their sense of the graces they receive from Him gives them a proportionate sense of their inability to make an adequate return of gratitude for them. Hence nothing touched Margaret Mary more than the thought of the abuse of grace. "The abuse which I have made of it," she said, "is so great that I have nothing in myself which does not merit eternal punishment." This thought destroyed in her all incli-



nation to pride or desire of esteem. She begged of God to efface her from the remembrance of creatures, or to let them know her ingratitude for His goodness, in order that they might heap upon her the contempt and confusion which she thought were so justly due to her.

The Agony of our Blessed Lord in the Garden has always been a favourite subject of contemplation to the Saints. Our Blessed Lord explained to Margaret Mary, in a Vision in 1673, the first year after her Profession, the sufferings He endured in this scene of His Passion for the sins of mankind, in order to prepare her the better for the sufferings she was to endure in the office of reparation which He designed for her.

“As I was considering attentively,” she says, “the only object of my love in the Garden of Olives plunged in the sadness and agony of deep and loving grief, and feeling within me a strong desire to share in His sorrowful anguish, ‘It is here,’ He said to me, ‘that I suffered interiorly more than in all the rest of My Passion, seeing Myself abandoned by Heaven and earth, and charged with the sins of all mankind. I appeared in the presence of the sanctity of God, Who, without having regard to My innocence, punished Me in His wrath, making Me drink the chalice filled with the gall and bitterness of His just indignation, and as though He had forgotten the name of Father to sacrifice Me to His just anger. No creature can comprehend the greatness of the torments which I suffered at that time. It is the same grief the criminal soul feels when it is before the tribunal of the divine sanctity which weighs upon it, punishes it, and overwhelms it in its just wrath.’ He added : ‘My justice is irritated, and ready to punish

hidden sinners by open chastisements, unless they do penance. I will make known to you when My justice is ready to inflict its blow upon those guilty heads. It will be when you feel My sanctity weigh heavily upon you. You must then raise your heart and your hands to Heaven by prayer and good works, presenting Me continually to My Father as a victim of love sacrificed and offered for the sins of the whole world ; placing Me as a rampart and sure fortress between His justice and sinners in order to obtain My mercy, with which you will feel yourself surrounded when I wish to pardon any one of these sinners. It is then that you must offer Me to My Father, as the only object of His loving complacency, in thanksgiving for the mercy which He exercises towards sinners. You will know, moreover, when this soul will persevere so as to attain Heaven, for I will impart to you some slight sample of the joy which the Blessed experience on account of it, and all this by the communication of My love.' ”

It was not long before Margaret Mary experienced these effects of which our Blessed Lord had forewarned her. It was during the period of the first time of recollection which followed her Profession. “The divine sanctity,” she says, “weighed so heavily upon me that I was unable to pray and to bear the interior grief which I felt. I had such a feeling of despair, and so great a grief at appearing before my God, that if the same power which made me suffer had not supported me I would willingly a thousand times have buried, destroyed, and annihilated myself, had it been in my power. And yet, in spite of all, I could not withdraw from the Divine Presence. It pursued me everywhere,

as a criminal on the point of receiving her condemnation, though, at the same time, I felt so great a submission to the divine will of my God that I was ready to receive all the pains and sorrows which He was pleased to send me with the same readiness as the sweetness of His love."

Our Lord gave her notice also of the occasion which called forth the anger of His justice. "I thought," she says, "I heard a voice saying to me: 'The Lord is tired of waiting; He will enter into His granaries to sift His wheat, and separate the good grain from the bad.'" She tried to turn away her mind as from a distraction, but she felt compelled to hear a voice, which said to her: "My chosen people persecute Me in secret, and they have irritated My justice. But I will manifest their secret sins by visible chastisements, for I will sift them in the sieve of My sanctity, to separate them from My well-beloved. Having separated them I will surround them with the same sanctity which places itself between the sinner and My mercy. And when My sanctity has once surrounded the sinner it is impossible for him to enter into himself. His conscience remains without remorse, his understanding without light, his heart without contrition, and he dies at length in his blindness." \*

Our Lord afterwards disclosed to her His Heart, torn and pierced with wounds. "See the wounds," He said, "which I receive from My chosen people. Others

\* This language is the same as that which is found in Holy Scripture, and must be understood in the same sense. If the sinner would make use of the graces which Almighty God offers him he would enter into himself, and his conversion would be secured.

content themselves with striking My Body; these attack My Heart, which has never ceased to love them. But My love will give place at length to My just anger, to chastise these proud souls so attached to the earth, who despise Me, and love only what is opposed to Me. They abandon Me for creatures, and fly humility to seek only esteem for themselves. And as their hearts are void of charity, they have nothing of Religious remaining but the name."

"During this time I never ceased," she says, "to ask of my God a true conversion for all those souls against whom His justice was irritated, offering Him the merits of the Life, Death, and Passion of His Divine Son, my Saviour, in satisfaction for the injuries which He has received from us; offering myself to His divine goodness to suffer all the pains which He should be pleased to send me, so as even to be annihilated rather than see those souls perish which had cost Him so dear."

The impression produced on Margaret Mary by the sanctity of God caused her, on another occasion, to find her torment in that which formed her greatest delight, Holy Communion. "Having suffered a long time," she says, "under the weight of the sanctity of God, I lost my voice and my strength. I felt so great a confusion at appearing before creatures that death would have been preferable to me. Holy Communion was so grievous to me that it would be difficult for me to explain how painful it was for me to approach it, though I was not allowed to do otherwise, for He Himself placed me in this state, and forbade me to keep away. I could say with the Prophet that my

tears served me for food night and day. Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, Who was my only refuge, treated me with such indignation that I endured a kind of agony, and I could remain before It only by doing extreme violence to myself. If at times I would go and present myself before Him, saying, 'Whither, O Divine Justice, wouldst Thou have me go, since Thou accompaniest me everywhere?' I went in and came out not knowing what to do, and without finding any rest but that of grief."

In order perhaps to encourage her amidst the sufferings which the sight of His sanctity inflicted upon her, our Lord would show to Margaret Mary the conduct which caused His sufferings on the part of those for whom He wished her to make reparation. "One day our Lord presented Himself to me," she says, "covered with wounds, His Body all bleeding, and His Heart torn with grief. He was as though quite wearied. I prostrated myself at His feet, filled with awe, and without daring to say anything to Him. 'See,' He said, 'the state to which My chosen people have reduced Me—those whom I had designed to appease My justice. They persecute Me in secret. If they do not amend, I will chastise them severely. I will withdraw the just, and sacrifice the rest to My just wrath, which shall be enkindled against them.'" It was to the love of His Sacred Heart itself that she had recourse in order to appease His offended justice. "I presented to Him," she says, "His own suffering love, one single look of which was capable of appeasing His wrath."

It was of the injury which He received in Holy

Communion that our Blessed Lord specially complained, and it was in order to make reparation for this that Margaret Mary suffered that apprehension which she experienced in receiving Holy Communion. "One day," she says, "feeling myself seized with a lively apprehension of approaching Holy Communion, from fear of dishonouring my Saviour, but not having been able to obtain permission of my Mother Superior to stay away, I approached with so extraordinary a sorrow that my whole body shuddered with apprehension of that grief which my Saviour would feel on account of some souls who were to receive Him." "After Holy Communion," she says, "He presented Himself to me as the *Ecce Homo*, all torn and disfigured. 'I have not found any one,' He said, 'who would give Me a place of repose in this My suffering and sorrowful condition.' This sight impressed me with so lively a sorrow that I would rather have died a thousand times than see my Saviour in such a condition. 'If you knew,' He said to me, 'who they are who have reduced Me to this condition, your grief would be much greater. Five souls consecrated to My service have treated Me thus. I have been dragged by strong cords through a narrow space beset with sharp points, nails, and thorns, and they have brought Me to this state.'

"On my feeling a great desire to know the meaning of these words, our Lord explained to me that the cords were the promises by which He had bound Himself to give Himself to us; their strength was His love; the narrow space were hearts that were ill-disposed; and the sharp points the spirit of pride. I

offered to Him the heart He had given me as a place of repose. He presented Himself to me, and told me to kiss His wounds, in order that I might relieve the pain."

Our Lord manifested to Margaret Mary in the following Vision the spirit of pride for which He would have her make reparation by acts of humility. "One day after Holy Communion," she says, "He showed me a rugged crown made of nineteen sharp thorns, which pierced His Divine Head. I felt so lively a sorrow, that I could speak to Him only by my tears. He told me that He had come to seek me, that I might pluck out the thorns which had been thus deeply buried in His Head by a faithless Spouse. 'She pierces My brain with thorns,' He said, 'as often as in her pride she prefers herself to Me.' Not knowing what to do to draw them out, I was desired by the Mother Superior to ask our Lord. He told me that I should make as many acts of humility, in order to honour His humiliations. But, as I was so proud myself, I begged of the Mother Superior to offer to our Lord the practices of humility of the Community. This was very pleasing to Him; and, five days after, He showed me three of the wounds, the pain of which was much relieved. The others remained still a long time."

Our Lord repaid the sufferings which Margaret Mary endured from the sanctity of His justice by the following singular favour of His love, by which He allowed her after Communion to repose near His Sacred Heart. "On a Friday," she says, "after I had received my Saviour, He placed my mouth to the Wound of His Sacred Side, and held me close to Him,

for three or four hours, with delights which I cannot express. I heard meanwhile the words frequently repeated: 'You see now that nothing is lost by trusting to My power, and that everything is to be found in My enjoyment.' 'O my Love,' I said to Him, 'I will gladly quit all these excessive delights, to love Thee for the love of Thyself;' and I repeated these words as often as He renewed His caresses."

Our Lord taught her at this time a practice by which she might honour the Agony which He endured in the Garden, and took occasion at the same time to impress upon her the supreme importance of obedience founded on supernatural love, and of the cordial union of Religious with their Superiors.

"He told me at this time," she says, "that I should rise at the hour which He would appoint, and recite five *Paters* and five *Aves* prostrate on the ground, together with five acts of adoration which He had taught me, to render Him homage for the extreme anguish which He suffered on the night of His Passion. 'Thou knowest, my Lord,' I replied, 'that I am not my own, and that I will do only what my Mother Superior shall order me.' 'I understand it no otherwise,' He said to me, 'for, Almighty as I am, I ask nothing of you but in dependence on your Mother Superior. Give good heed to these words from the mouth of Truth. All Religious who are disconnected and separated from their Superiors, should regard themselves as vessels of reprobation in which every good liquor is changed into corruption, and on which the divine Sun of justice, as He pours His rays, produces the same effect as the rays of the sun upon mud. The



more such souls endeavour to approach My Heart by means of the sacraments, prayers, and other exercises, the further do I retire from them, so great is the horror I have of them. They will fall from one hell into another, for it is this disunion which has destroyed so many, and will destroy more. For every Superior holds My place, be he good or bad. Every inferior, therefore, who thinks to act against him, inflicts so many mortal wounds on his own soul. And in vain at last will he groan at the gate of mercy, for he will not be heard.' ”

Our Lord comforted Margaret Mary also under the sufferings she endured from the impression of the sanctity of His justice by assuring her of the power which they exercised in favour of sinners. “I allow you,” He said, “to feel a little sample ; for just souls suffer in this manner from My sanctity in order that the rigour of its justice may not fall upon sinners.”

As she was preparing to make her annual confession, and felt a great anxiety to discover her sins, “Why do you torment yourself?” our Lord said to her ; “do what is in your power, and I will supply for what is wanting. I require nothing so much in the sacraments as a contrite and humble heart, which, with a sincere will no more to offend Me, accuses itself without disguise. I then pardon without delay, and thereupon follows a perfect amendment.” She then made her annual confession, after which it seemed to her as though her dress were taken off her, and she was clothed in a white robe.

After Holy Communion, our Lord said to her, “I have come, My well-beloved, your Spouse, your God,

and your Love, to clothe your soul in a robe of innocence, in order that you may live the life of a Man-God. To this end I will simplify and purify all your powers, that they may no longer receive any other impression. It is in the presence of the Holy Trinity and of My Holy Mother that I do you this favour.\* If you ever lose it, you will never more receive it, and you will hurl yourself into so deep an abyss, by reason of the height where I have lodged you, which is the Wound of My Heart, that you will never again be able to rise from the fall."

Margaret Mary describes the effect which this grace produced upon her soul. It destroyed in it every desire but that of loving God, and every fear but that of offending Him. "My Beloved," she says, "has consumed in me every desire but that of receiving His divine love, and has left me without fear of anything but of sin. Of this He gives me so great a fear that I would rather see myself given up to the fury of all the devils than see my soul stained with the slightest sin. The regret which I feel for so many horrible crimes which I have committed against God makes me offer myself unceasingly to His divine goodness to suffer all the punishment I have deserved for them, as also for the sins into which I should have fallen had it not

\* In writing to Father Rolin, about the year 1686; an account of the graces which she had received from our Lord, Blessed Margaret Mary speaks of this favour:—"After a general confession of all my criminal life, immediately after the absolution, our Lord caused me to be clothed with a robe whiter than snow, which He called the robe of innocence. After which He opened His Heart, and said to me, 'Behold the place of your abode for ever, wherein you will be able to preserve without spot the robe of innocence with which I have clothed your soul.'"

been for the assistance of His grace. I abandon myself to all the chastisements which it shall please God to inflict upon me, with the exception of relapse into sin. In truth, I would rather plunge into the most dreadful abyss than accept of this. I also ask of my God to efface me from the memory of every creature, that they may remember this miserable nothing only to avenge on me the outrages which I have inflicted on my God by so many sins which I have committed, since I cannot avenge them myself, as I am wholly sacrificed to obedience. Would that all creatures were animated with a holy zeal to treat me as a criminal guilty of high treason. But in fine, it is to my God that I abandon myself, since He alone knows the grief of my heart for my ingratitude. He alone is the sovereign remedy for all my evils. They can be understood by Him alone. All things find their rest only in their centre; my heart is wholly buried in its centre, which is the most humble Heart of Jesus. It finds therein a burning thirst for humiliations, contempt, and oblivion on the part of all creatures. For I can never feel so happy as when I am conformed to my Crucified Spouse. It is this which makes me love my own abjection more than my life, holding the precious treasure clasped to my heart as a pledge of the love of my Well-Beloved, which should never quit me for a moment."

Margaret Mary describes also by obedience her ordinary employment during the time of prayer. "Every morning," she says, "when I awake I seem to find my God present, and my heart unites itself to Him as to its first beginning and its only satisfaction. This gives me so burning a thirst to go to prayer, that whilst I

am dressing minutes seem to be hours. I go to it most frequently without any other preparation than that which my God makes within me. I present myself to Him commonly as a sick person before an all-powerful Physician, and apart from Whom I can find no refuge or comfort. I place myself at His feet as a living victim, who has no other desire but to be wholly offered and sacrificed to Him, in order to consume myself as a holocaust in the pure flames of His love. I then feel my heart lost as in a burning furnace, without my having any more the use of it. It seems to me sometimes that my spirit quits me to go and unite and lose itself in the infinite greatness of its God, without its being in my power to apply it to the subject which I have prepared. It is satisfied to stop on this one object in which it finds a plenitude so great that all else is a matter of indifference to it. My understanding has no light or knowledge but that which the divine Sun of justice communicates to it. I have no other impression or movement but that of loving Him, and I feel myself sometimes so strongly urged to it that I would willingly give a thousand lives, if it were possible, to testify to Him the desire and ardour which consume me. I use all my power to embrace my Beloved with the powers of my soul. The time of prayer seems to me so short that I frequently complain to my God, saying, 'When shall it be, Beloved of my Soul, that the moments which are so brief, and so unfeeling in their fleeting course, shall no longer have the power to limit my happiness?' I am so strongly drawn to Him that I often feel deprived of the power of drawing a sigh, as though my breast were scored with razors.

It is with difficulty that I can breathe, and I remain sometimes thus during the whole time of prayer, my body suffering with my Jesus and my spirit rejoicing in loving Him. But in this the inferior part does not find its account, for it neither sees nor knows what passes in the higher part of my soul, which forgets itself, and has no other desire but that of uniting itself with God."

In this account given by Margaret Mary we seem to see a description of what St. Teresa speaks of as the fourth, or highest, degree of prayer. In explaining it, she says: "Here there is no longer question of perceiving anything distinctly, but simply of enjoying, without knowing what it is that one enjoys. We perceive, indeed, clearly that we are enjoying a good in which are comprised all goods together, but we do not understand what this good is. All the faculties and all the senses are so occupied with this joy that none are any longer free to be able to give attention to anything whatever, either interior or exterior. . . . During this time, all application to any other object would be an embarrassment and torture to the soul, and would only serve to distract it from its sweet repose.

"Commonly, this elevation of the spirit like a flame, and this transport of the soul, rising as it were above itself, takes place during the time of its union and the ardour of its heavenly love; for, as I understand it, the simple union of the powers of the soul with God is different from the elevation of the soul which takes place in this union. . . . All the powers are, as it were, buried and suspended in their action, so that

we cannot know, as I have said, in any manner that they act. If one was occupied with any mystery, the memory of it is lost, as if one had never thought of it; if employed in reading, we no longer remember what we were reading, and can no longer fix our attention upon it. The will is occupied with loving, but without knowing how it loves; and as for the understanding, if it knows anything of what is passing, it does not understand itself how it knows it." "It should be remarked and well understood," she adds, "that this so singular a grace of our Lord always leaves in the soul great spiritual riches."

"My good Master," continues Margaret Mary, "allows me to feel sensibly His divine presence, and discovers its beauties to my soul. His love so binds at the same time all my powers, that I am unable to say anything to Him to testify to Him the ardour of my love, which is a torment to me, though its sweetness is so great. I use every effort to escape from this state, but in vain. 'Thou mockest at the endeavours of my heart,' I say to our Lord, 'to testify to Thee its love.' 'You have no longer the use of it,' He replied, 'but all its movements are known to Me.'" "With this," she says, "I remained content."

"Such," says Margaret Mary, "is my ordinary employment in prayer; though it is not I that make it, but my God makes it Himself in me, wretched creature as I am. Most commonly, I finish it without knowing what I have done in it, and without making any resolution, petition, or offering, except that of my Jesus to His Eternal Father."

It is this recourse to the Sacred Humanity of

our Lord that St. Teresa recommends in such strong terms, however high the degree of prayer to which any one may be raised. "I see clearly," she says, "and have recognised for a long time, that in order to please God we must address ourselves to this most sacred Humanity, in which He has said He takes His delight, and through the mediation of which He wishes to confer upon us His greatest graces." "On this account, Reverend Father," she says to her Director, "do not seek any other way, even though you be arrived at the greatest height of contemplation."

"'My God,' I say," continues Margaret Mary, "'I offer Thee Thy well-beloved Son for my thanksgiving for all the blessings Thou conferrest upon me, for my petition, my offering, my adoration, and all my resolutions. In fine, I offer Him to Thee for my love and my all. Receive Him, Eternal Father, for all that Thou desirest of me. I have nothing to offer Thee which is not unworthy of Thee except Him, the possession of Whom Thou givest me with so much love.'"

Whilst Margaret Mary enjoyed the favour of being closely united to God in prayer, it was not likely that she should escape temptations which would seek, under the appearance of good, to deprive her of so rich treasure. "Nature and self-love," she says, "meanwhile assail me violently. They tell me that I am wasting my time, and that I am in the way of perdition. This throws me sometimes into such great trouble that I know not to whom to have recourse except to my God. I find Him ever ready to assist me to escape from this disquietude. He allows my soul to enjoy His divine presence, and infuses into it a peace which

restores me at once to my former tranquillity. 'A child can never perish,' He says to me, 'in the arms of an Almighty Father.' I abandon myself then entirely to His divine will, in order that He may act in me according to His good pleasure without having regard to my own satisfaction. His loving will is so dear to me that I would rather see my body exposed to all the furies of hell than do anything contrary to His good pleasure. I wish to submit myself blindly to Him even in what appears to me most difficult, such as to see a God so great and powerful confer so many favours on so miserable a creature, who continually abuses them.

"I feel my heart burning with a secret and interior fire which absorbs every suffering. I feel but one wound a little below my heart, which is inconceivably delightful to me. The fire which consumes me makes me feel as though I had no longer any power over my heart, and spreading sometimes from my breast to my face it inebriates me, as it were, with such sweetness that I do not know where I am or what I am doing, especially when I communicate frequently."



## CHAPTER XI.

1674—1675.

AS Margaret Mary proceeds to recount the favours bestowed upon her by our Lord, she gives expression from time to time to the mortal repugnance which she feels to continue the recital. "But," she adds, "I continue by obedience to write the account of the graces conferred upon me during my third and fourth year in Religion."

As our Lord had chosen Margaret Mary to communicate to others that fire of divine love which burnt in His Heart, and which He wished to cast upon the earth, He chose her as a sanctuary in which the fire of His love might burn continually. "Do you know," our Lord said to her, "to what end I give you My graces so abundantly? It is to make you as a sanctuary where the fire of My love may burn continually. Your heart is as a consecrated altar, which nothing defiled should approach. I have chosen it in order to offer to My Eternal Father a burning sacrifice to appease His justice, and to give Him infinite glory by the offering you shall make to Him of Myself, uniting with it that of your whole being in order to honour the Sacrifice which I made of Myself."

"I acknowledge," she says, "that after that time I felt in my heart so strong and burning a fire that

I should have wished to communicate it to all creatures in order that my God might be loved. For this purpose I prostrated myself upon the earth, and whilst I offered our Lord to His Eternal Father, I sunk into my own nothing that I might render homage to His greatness."

The love of our Blessed Lord is to be found in its true source and centre, which is His Sacred Heart. This lesson our Lord taught Margaret Mary in the following Vision, by which He instructed her where she was to learn the love she desired, and what are its characteristics. "My Beloved presented Himself to me," as she describes it, "and said, 'I wish you to read in the book of life, in which is contained the science of love.' And discovering to me His Sacred Heart, He showed me written there the following words: 'My love reigns in suffering, triumphs in humility, and rejoices in unity.'" This lesson, she says, made such an impression upon her that she never lost the remembrance of it.

A heart which allows the will to sin still to linger within it offers thereby a greater outrage to the love of our Lord than even by an act of sin itself. This our Lord explained to Margaret Mary on the following occasion, in reference to the conduct of one who had received Him in Holy Communion. "See, My Daughter," He said, "the ill-treatment I receive in this soul which has just received Me. She has renewed all the sufferings of My Passion." Margaret Mary, seized with fear and grief, cast herself at His feet, and offered herself with tears to make atonement to Him for the injuries He had received. "My Lord and my God," she said, "if my life is of any use to atone for these injuries, though those which

Thou receivest from me are a thousand times greater, I am Thy slave, do with me whatever Thou pleasest." "I desire," He said, "when I let you know the ill-treatment which I receive from this soul, that after receiving Me you prostrate yourself at My feet to make amends to My Heart. Offer to My Father for this end the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross, and in union with it your whole being, in order to render homage to the Sacrifice which I offered, and repair the indignities which I receive from this heart."

"I was quite surprised," she says, "to hear such words regarding a soul which had just washed herself in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. But the same voice said to me again: 'It is not that she is in sin; but the will to sin still lingers in her heart. And this I regard with greater horror than the act of sin itself, for it is to apply My Blood with contempt to a corrupt heart, inasmuch as an evil will is the root of all corruption.' At these words I suffered great pain, begging mercy unceasingly of our Lord." Nor were her prayers in vain. "He told me," she says, "one day after Easter, after I had received Him—'I have heard your groaning, and have inclined My mercy towards this soul.' " "This," she adds, "consoled me greatly."

In order to refresh her soul, which often suffered great agony from the sanctity of His iustice, our Lord invited her to His Sacred Heart, as a delightful garden, and bade her gather at will the flowers that grew there. But, true to the spirit of love which animated her, she would gather only myrrh, the emblem of mortification and suffering, which she desired in order to be con-

formed to Him. "One day," she says, "I felt my soul in a very painful agony, when our Lord, honouring me with His visit, said to me, 'Enter, My Daughter, into this delightful garden, in order to revive your languishing soul.' It was, I saw, His Sacred Heart, and the flowers were most pleasing by their variety and wondrous beauty. After I had looked at them all without daring to touch them, 'You may gather them,' He said, 'at your pleasure.' Casting myself at His sacred feet, 'My Divine Saviour,' I said to Him, 'I wish for none but Thee, Who art a bundle of myrrh to me, which I would fain carry continually in the arms of my affection.' 'You have chosen well,' He replied; 'it is myrrh alone which can retain its beauty and fragrance. This life is its season; it is not known in eternity. It bears there another name.'"

Our Lord, as we have seen, constantly bore Margaret Mary company, and accompanied her wherever she went. Inviting her to bear the weight of His sanctity of justice, He presented Himself to her, bearing a heavy burden, which He wished to place upon her shoulders, that His justice might not fall on a faithless soul whom He showed to her. She offered herself to bear the burden, and so great was the suffering she endured that she fell into a severe illness. "I saw Him," she says, "with a heavy burden, which He wished to place upon my shoulders." "Will you bear the weight of My sanctity of justice?" He said; "I am ready to let it fall heavily upon that Religious," and He showed her to her. Margaret Mary cast herself at His feet. "Rather consume me," she said, "even to

the marrow of my bones, than destroy that soul which has cost Thee so dear. Spare not my life; I sacrifice it to Thee."

"As I rose from the earth I found myself," she says, "charged with a weight which so overwhelmed me that I could not drag myself along. I then felt myself consumed with so burning a fire that it penetrated even to the marrow of my bones. This obliged me in a short time to betake myself to my bed, under the effects of a severe illness. God alone knows what I had to suffer."

The desire, however, which she had to receive our Lord in Holy Communion was so strong that it overcame even her illness. Our Lord, who gave her the desire, gave her also the strength to carry it into execution. "During my illness," she says, "I felt a strong desire to go to the Choir to receive Holy Communion, though I was so weak at the time that I could not support myself. I saw clearly," she says, "that my endeavour would be in vain unless He Who attracted me gave me strength to carry out my desire. He was not long in coming to my aid. It seemed to me that He touched me with His hand and said to me: 'What do you fear, Daughter of little faith? Arise and come and find Me.'" "I felt," she says, "that the command had such an effect that it seemed to me I had no longer anything the matter with me. I arose, without acquainting the Infirmarian; but she required me to go to bed at once, in spite of every assurance that I could give her of my being well. Our Mother, on her coming, reproved me for the attachment I showed to my own will. I did not tell her the reason, fearing it

might be an imagination, and that she might believe it to be reality." \*

The love which Margaret Mary entertained for our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion, and her sense of the injuries to which He exposed Himself in that Mystery, led her to feel inexpressible pain at the thought of this Bread of Life being eaten unworthily.

She felt then especial pain on His showing her the ill-treatment He received in a soul in which she saw Him, as it were, bound, trampled upon, and despised. On another occasion she saw Him in a heart which resisted His love. He held His hands to His sacred ears, and His eyes were closed, whilst He said : "I will not hear what she says to me or look upon her misery, that so My Heart may be untouched, and as insensible towards her as she is towards Me."

He taught her Himself a practice by means of which she might move Him to have compassion on hardened hearts. He desired her to come every Friday to adore Him thirty-three times upon the Cross, the throne of His mercy. She was to endeavour to keep herself in the same dispositions in which the Blessed Virgin stood at the foot of the Cross, and to beg of the Eternal Father, by the sufferings of His Divine Son, the conversion of hardened hearts.

As the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word forms the object of the complacency of the Eternal Father, so it is in the most pure Heart of the Blessed Virgin

\* This is not the case of a sudden cure, which brought also a correction upon Margaret Mary, during the time that Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié was Mother Superior, as will appear later. The present instance occurred in 1674, in the time of Mother de Saumaise.

that we are to find the dispositions required for approaching both the Eternal Father and her Divine Son. Hence, when our Lord would teach Margaret Mary the dispositions in which she was to discharge the three great acts, of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, receiving Him in Holy Communion, and offering her Prayer, He taught her to look for them in the Heart of His Blessed Mother.

She was to assist at Mass, He told her, in the dispositions above mentioned, in which the Blessed Virgin stood at the foot of the Cross.

She was to present Him, when she received Him in Holy Communion, the dispositions of His Blessed Mother, as she pronounced the words—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

In Prayer she was to offer up the dispositions which were in the Heart of the Blessed Virgin as she was presented in the Temple.

Great as was the love of Margaret Mary for the Blessed Sacrament, she quitted It at once when called elsewhere by obedience. "It is of little matter," she said to our Blessed Lord, "in what Thou employest me; the whole time is Thine and not mine. It is for Thee to require me to employ it according to Thy desire. But I leave my heart," she said, "in presence of the Adorable Sacrament, whilst I go to sacrifice my will to Thine. It shall remain before Thee as a burning lamp, which wastes itself away in honouring Thee."

After these and similar expressions, as she was making her genuflexion before retiring, our Lord said to her: "Are you going, then, without your heart, since yours is never more to quit this place? I will fill it with

a precious balm, which will keep alive in it the fire of My love. Good-will shall be the wick, and it shall never burn away. All that you do and suffer with My grace you must place in My Heart. It shall then be changed into a precious balm, to serve as the oil of this lamp, and all shall be consumed by the fire of My divine love."

"I take such pleasure," added our Lord, "in seeing your heart that I wish to put Myself in its place, and to serve as your heart." "This He did," she says, "in so sensible a manner that I could not doubt it. Since that time," she adds, "His goodness gives me so free an access to His greatness that I cannot express it. Sometimes He allowed me to see my heart, which is truly His and no longer mine, as a lamp before the Blessed Sacrament. He then said to me: 'Have you lost by the change which you have made with Me in giving Me all? Be careful only to fill your lamp and I will kindle the fire.'" Her soul experienced such transports of joy that it seemed, she says, as if it were on the point of quitting her body. "Be very careful," our Lord said to her another time, "never to allow this lamp to go out. For if it is once out you will no longer have any fire to rekindle it."

"It is thus," says Margaret Mary, in conclusion, "that our Lord lavished upon His wretched slave favours without number, which I pass over in silence. I will only say that from that time I had no other preparation for Holy Communion than Himself; He served me in place of heart, soul, mind, will, life, love, and all. As I feared that there might be some gross negligence in myself I frequently endeavoured to read over a point of medi-



tation ; but after I had read it over several times I found that I knew as little about it as before. All vanished from my mind ; whilst I frequently heard the following reproach : ‘Why do you seek for means to find the end which you already possess?’ I enjoyed no longer any pleasure but in the closet of my heart, where I always found my Spouse ; nor did exterior occupations interrupt this sweet converse.”

Margaret Mary made known these singular graces which she received to her Mother Superior and her Mistress of Novices, from whom she kept nothing concealed. She was told they were extraordinary ways, which did not suit the spirit of the Daughters of the Visitation. This caused her, as may be supposed, much grief, and she used, in consequence, every effort to withdraw herself from this state. But all her endeavours were in vain. “For the Spirit which possessed me,” she says, “had already established such a dominion over mine that I could no longer make use of it, or of my interior powers, which I found were wholly absorbed in Him.” She did all in her power to follow the method of prayer taught her, but to no effect ; she could only retain what her Divine Master of prayer taught her Himself. Her Superiors, in order to test the truth of these divine operations, did all in their power to efface them, and she was desired to do the same. “This caused me,” she says, “to suffer a great deal. I combated against Him as I was told, and followed exactly all that obedience required of me, in order to withdraw myself from His power. But He rendered all my efforts useless. I complained to Him, saying : “Alas ! my Sovereign Lord, why dost Thou not leave me in the common way

of the Daughters of Holy Mary? Hast Thou, then, brought me into Thy holy house to destroy me? Give these Thy extraordinary graces to those chosen souls who will correspond with them better than I do, for I only resist Thee. All I wish for is Thy love and Thy Cross; that suffices for my being a good Religious, and that is all I desire. 'Let us then combat, My Daughter,' was the reply I received; 'I am content. We will see which of the two will gain the victory, the Creator or His creature, but whoever conquers shall remain conqueror for ever.'" "These words threw me," she says, "into an extreme confusion."

Our Lord assured her that He was not offended at the opposition she made Him by obedience; and that He not only wished her to do what her Superiors told her, but moreover to do nothing that He ordered her without their consent. "But I will teach you," He said, "that I am Master of My gifts and of My own creatures, and that nothing shall prevent Me from accomplishing My designs." This injunction gave great pleasure to her Mother Superior. "She allowed me," says Margaret Mary, "to abandon myself to the power of the Spirit who conducted me, and this I did with great joy."

Margaret Mary now enjoyed great peace, freed as she was from the state of violent constraint in which she had been kept; and acting under the influence of the Spirit who guided her, she renewed one day after Holy Communion the sacrifice she had already made of her liberty and her whole being to God. The only request she made was that our Lord would allow nothing extraordinary to appear outwardly in her, unless

it were what would serve to humble her more before creatures, and destroy their esteem of her. She was afraid that she might betray our Lord, and that His gifts would not be safe in her keeping. But our Lord reassured her, and promised to be Himself the guardian of His gifts in her heart. "Fear nothing, My Daughter, He said to her, "I will order everything aright; I will be Myself the guardian of your heart, and I will make you faithful in accomplishing My will."

## CHAPTER XII.

1674.

OUR Lord had hitherto bestowed many singular graces upon Margaret Mary, in order to prepare her soul for the work for which He destined her. He had with this view favoured her also from time to time with some glimpses, as it were, of His Sacred Heart. But these appeared to have reference more immediately to herself. He had opened to her the Wound of His Sacred Side, in which she was to find a place of abode, and a secret charm which was to sweeten every difficulty. The Sacred Heart had been mysteriously represented to her at one time as an ocean, as it were, of light, in which her own heart, as a dark atom, was absorbed and lost ; at another as an abyss of love into which she was to plunge herself to escape the abyss of her own misery. It had been laid open to her as a book of life in which she was to learn the science of divine love ; as a delightful garden, the beauty and fragrance of which was to revive her soul.

But our Lord began now to manifest to her in a more special manner the precious treasure of His Sacred Heart, which she was to make known and communicate to others.

“ Being one day before the Blessed Sacrament,” is the account which she gives herself of the extraordinary

favour she received, "and having at the time more leisure than usual, I felt myself wholly invested with the presence of God, so that I lost all thought of myself and the place where I was, and abandoned myself to the Divine Spirit, yielding up my heart to the power of His love. My Sovereign Master made me repose for a long time upon His Divine Breast, where He discovered to me the marvels of His love and the inexplicable secrets of His Sacred Heart, which He had up to this time kept concealed from me. He opened to me for the first time His Divine Heart in a manner so real and sensible, that He left me no room to doubt of the reality of this grace, in spite of the dread which I have always had of deceiving myself in anything that I say on such matters.

"The following, as it seems to me, is the way in which the thing occurred. Jesus said to me, 'My Divine Heart is so full of love for men, and for you in particular, that being unable to contain within Itself the flames of Its burning charity, It must needs spread them abroad by your means, and manifest Itself to them to enrich them with the treasures It contains. I discover to you the price of these treasures; they contain graces of sanctification and salvation necessary to draw them from the abyss of perdition. I have chosen you, in spite of your unworthiness and ignorance, for the accomplishment of this great design, in order that it may better appear that all is done by Me.'"

After these words, our Lord asked her for her heart. She begged of Him to take it. This He did, and placed it in His own Adorable Heart, where He showed it to her as a little atom which was being

consumed in this burning furnace. Withdrawing it then as a burning flame in form of a heart, He restored it to the place from whence He had taken it, saying to her, "See, My well-beloved, I give you a precious pledge of My love. I have enclosed within your side a little spark of the vivid flames of that love to serve you for a heart, and to consume you to the last moment of your life. Its ardour will never be extinguished, and you will be unable to find any relief from it, except some slight relief by bleeding. And even this remedy will bring you more humiliation and suffering than relief. I wish you therefore to ask for it with simplicity, both in order to put in practice what is prescribed by the Rule, and also to give you the consolation of shedding your blood on the cross of humiliations. In fine, to leave you a mark that the favour I have done you is not an imagination, and that it is to be the foundation of all those which I design to confer upon you, although I have closed the wound in your side, the pain, nevertheless, will constantly continue. You have taken, hitherto, only the name of My slave, I give you from this time that of the beloved Disciple of My Sacred Heart."

After this signal favour, which lasted for a long time, and during which, as she expresses it, she did not know whether she was in Heaven or upon earth, Margaret Mary remained for several days all on fire, as it were, with divine love, and so out of herself that she could hardly speak a word. She was obliged to do violence to herself to join in recreation or take food. She could not sleep for the wound in her side, the pain of which was so precious to her, and enkindled such an ardour

within her, that it in a manner consumed her and burned her alive.

She felt, as she expresses it, such a plenitude of God that she could not express herself to her Mother Superior as she would have wished to do, in spite of the pain and confusion which she felt in speaking of such favours. "This confusion which I feel in consequence of my unworthiness is so great," she says, "that I would prefer a thousand times to tell my sins to the whole world. It would indeed have been a great consolation to me had I been allowed to tell them, and to read my general confession aloud in the Refectory, in order to show the great corruption within me, and that no one might attribute to myself the graces which I received."

This signal favour was renewed on the first Friday of each month in the following manner. The Sacred Heart was represented to her as a sun, shining with great splendour, the burning rays of which fell vertically upon her heart, which was enflamed with a fire so vivid that it seemed as if it would reduce her to ashes. It was at these times especially that our Divine Lord gave her His lessons, and disclosed to her the secrets of His Heart.

She mentions one occasion in particular. On this our Divine Lord instructed her to go to Holy Communion as often as she was allowed, to communicate on the first Friday of each month, and to watch for an hour during the night between Thursday and Friday, from eleven till midnight. This has since been known by the name of the "Holy Hour."

"On one occasion," she says, "whilst the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, I felt drawn within myself by

an extraordinary recollection of all my senses and powers. Jesus Christ, my sweet Master, presented Himself to me all resplendent with glory, His Five Wounds shining like five suns. From His Sacred Humanity issued flames on all sides, but especially from His adorable Breast, which resembled a furnace, and which was open and disclosed to me His most amiable Heart, the living source of these flames. He revealed to me at the same time the ineffable marvels of His pure love, and the excess of His love towards men. He complained of their ingratitude, and said that He felt this more sensibly than any other pain in His Passion. 'If they made Me a return,' He said, 'all that I have done for them would appear but little to My love. But they entertain only coldness towards Me, and the only return they make to My advances is by rejecting Me. Do you at least give Me the consolation of supplying for their ingratitude as far as you are able.' On my representing to Him my inability, 'See,' He replied to me, 'this will enable you to supply for all your deficiencies.' And at the same moment His Heart opened, and there issued from it so burning a flame that I thought I should have been consumed by it. I could not bear it, and I asked Him to have pity on my weakness. 'I will be your strength,' He said to me; 'fear nothing, but be attentive to what I tell you, and to the following requests I make of you, in order to dispose you for the accomplishment of My designs:—

“‘You shall receive Me, in the first place, in Holy Communion as often as obedience shall permit you, whatever mortification or humiliation it may cause you, for they are pledges of My love.



“‘Secondly, you shall, moreover, communicate on the first Friday of each month.

“‘Thirdly, every night between Thursday and Friday, I will make you share in that mortal sadness I was pleased to feel in the Garden of Olives; and this participation which I will give you in My sadness shall reduce you to an agony harder to endure than death. You shall bear Me company in the humble prayer I offered at that time to My Father in My anguish. For this purpose you shall rise between eleven o’clock and midnight, and remain prostrate with Me during an hour, to appease the divine anger by begging mercy for sinners, and also to sweeten in some sort the bitterness which I felt at that time at being abandoned by My Apostles, and which obliged Me to reproach them for not having been able to watch with Me for one hour.

“‘You shall do during this hour what I shall teach you. But listen, My Daughter, believe not lightly nor trust every spirit. Satan, who is furious against you, seeks to deceive you. Do nothing, therefore, without the approbation of those who conduct you, for as long as you are under obedience he will be unable to do you any harm. He has no power over the obedient.’”

“During the whole of the time that this Vision lasted,” says Margaret Mary, “I lost all consciousness, and when they came to withdraw me from the place where I was praying, I no longer knew where I was. Seeing that I could not answer, or even support myself but with great difficulty, they led me to our Mother. I was quite out of myself, all burning and trembling. I threw myself on my knees before my Mother Superior,

who mortified and humbled me severely." "This gave me," she says, "incredible joy; for I felt myself so great a criminal, and was so filled with confusion, that however rigorously I might have been treated, any treatment would have appeared to me too mild."

On her giving an account of what had taken place, the Mother Superior humbled her still more, and refused to allow her anything of what our Lord had asked of her, treating with contempt all that she described to her. "This," says Margaret Mary, "consoled me greatly, and I withdrew in peace."

The divine fire which was communicated to her during this Rapture, as it may be called, consumed her with such ardour as to throw her into a violent fever. The pleasure, however, which this suffering gave her prevented her complaining of it, and it was only betrayed by her strength failing her. The medical man, who was called in to attend her, declared that she had had the fever a long time upon her. She had, after this, as many as sixty different returns of it.

The fire with which she was consumed showed the divine character of its origin by the love of suffering which it enkindled within her. "Never," she says, "did I feel such consolation; for my whole body suffered extreme pain, and this relieved a little the burning thirst I had for suffering. This devouring fire could only be fed by the fuel of the Cross, that is to say, with sufferings of every kind—contempt, humiliations, and pains."

The fever was so severe that it was supposed she would die. But our Lord favoured her at this time with the following signal grace. Whilst she was in a

trance, it seemed to her that the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity presented themselves to her under the form of three young men clothed in white and resplendent with light, and filled her soul with consolation. "It appeared to me," she says, "that the Eternal Father presented me with a great Cross, beset with thorns, and surrounded with the various instruments of the Passion, and said to me, 'See, My Daughter, I make you the same present which I made to My beloved Son.' 'And I,' said our Lord Jesus Christ, 'will fasten you to the Cross as I was fastened Myself, and will bear you faithful company.' The Third adorable Person, Who is Love, would, He told me, Himself consume and purify me thereon."

The effect of this Vision was to leave her soul in an inconceivable peace and joy. The impression which it produced upon her was never afterwards effaced from her mind. "I did not understand at the time," she says, "as I did afterwards, the great sufferings which this signified that I should endure."

Margaret Mary was ordered to ask of our Lord to restore her health. Her Mother Superior wished by this to receive some assurance from our Lord Himself that the singular graces with which she was favoured truly came from Him. She did as she was desired, but it was with a fear lest her request should be heard. On her being told, however, that the restoration of her health would be regarded as a sign that what passed in her came from the Spirit of God, and that she would be allowed to do what our Lord had commanded her, both as regards Communion on the first Fridays of the month and also the 'Holy Hour,' she represented the

whole matter to our Lord, and at once recovered her health.

It was through the hands of our Blessed Lady that she was to receive this, as she had already received so many other favours. "The Blessed Virgin, my good Mother," she says, "favoured me with her presence. She bestowed many caresses upon me, and after conversing with me for a long time, 'Take courage, my dear Daughter,' she said; 'I restore you your health at the will of my Divine Son. You have yet a long and painful way to go, always upon the Cross, pierced with nails and thorns, and torn with scourges. But fear nothing; I will not abandon you, and I promise you my protection.'" "This promise," observes Margaret Mary, "she has since truly kept, in the pressing needs in which I have required her protection."

So striking a miracle could hardly fail to set the mind of Mother de Saumaise at rest regarding the truth of the extraordinary favours bestowed upon Margaret Mary. But not wishing to trust her own judgment in the conduct of a soul called by Almighty God to such perfection, she thought it still her duty to consult some persons of learning upon the subject. Some of these her advisers failed to recognise the Spirit by which Margaret Mary was led. They condemned her remarkable attraction to prayer, treated her as a visionary, and would not allow her to follow the inspirations with which she was favoured.

We may judge what must have been the suffering which this caused her. "I made every effort," she says, "to resist these attractions, believing assuredly that I was deceived. But finding that it was to no purpose

that I did so, I felt sure that God must have abandoned me; for, on the one hand, I was told that it was not the Spirit of God that governed me, and, on the other, I found it impossible to resist the Spirit."

St. Teresa describes with great feeling the suffering she was led to endure from similar misapprehension and opposition on the part of good persons; and she was told by St. Peter of Alcantara that the contradiction which she had suffered from such persons was one of the severest trials to which any one could be exposed in this life. "As I saw then," she says, "that so many good persons were of the same mind, and that yet I could not bring myself to agree with them, I began to entertain a very great scruple regarding it, considering that I showed in this a great want of humility, and that since they were all incomparably better than myself, and at the same time very enlightened and clever, I was wrong in not deferring to their opinion. I did all I could to bring myself to submit; and with this view recalling to mind all the disorders of my past life, I thought that, judging of things on this footing, it might be very possible that what they said was true." She prayed continually to Almighty God for nearly two years to conduct her by some other way, without, however, being able, as she says, to reconcile herself to the thought that it was possible that it could have been the devil who had spoken to her on so many occasions. Our Lord Himself, however, dissipated at once by a few words, all her trouble. "Being on this occasion"—it is thus she describes the occurrence—"all alone in an oratory, without having any one in whose company I could relieve my trouble, and without being able either

to read or pray, like one oppressed with trouble and consternation, my heart filled with bitterness and sadness, and my mind possessed and agitated by this dreadful terror lest it was the devil who was deceiving me ; not knowing what to do with myself, I spent four or five hours in this cruel state of torture, finding no consolation either from Heaven or earth, abandoned by our Lord to suffering and to the apprehension of dangers of every kind. Whilst then I was in this great distress, the following words which I heard entirely calmed me at once, and made all my troubles disappear :—‘ Fear not, My Daughter, it is I ; I will not forsake you. Fear nothing.’ ”

It was by a similar assurance that our Lord calmed the apprehension with which Margaret Mary was agitated. He relieved her fears, and told her that He would shortly send His faithful servant, to whom He wished her to disclose, as He should direct, all the treasures and secrets of His Sacred Heart which He had confided to her, for He would send him to reassure and direct her in His way. We shall have occasion to see shortly who this faithful servant was.

Our Lord continued, in the meantime, to favour Margaret Mary with His sensible presence, and assured her that He would never deprive her of it. “ And in fact,” she says, “ He has never deprived me of it, whatever fault I committed.”

But it was an insupportable torment to her to appear in the presence of His sanctity if she ever gave way to the least infidelity. “ There is no kind of punishment,” she says, “ which I would not have chosen to undergo, rather than bear the presence of this God of Sanctity

when my soul was blemished with any fault. I would rather a thousand times have thrown myself into a burning furnace." Thus, having on one occasion allowed herself to give way to some motion of vanity in speaking of herself, this fault cost her many tears and groans. Our Lord reproved her for it severely. "What have you to boast of," He said, "dust and ashes as you are? Of yourself you are nothing and misery, an abyss which you should never lose sight of. In order that the greatness of My gifts may not lead you to forget what you are, I will set before you your own picture." "He discovered to me upon this," she says, "this horrid picture, in which was represented in brief all I am. I was so horrified at it, and conceived such a horror of myself, that had He not supported me I should have fainted with terror. I could not understand the excess of His infinite mercy in not having plunged me into hell, and in bearing with me so long, seeing that I could not bear myself."

It was in this manner that our Lord commonly punished the slightest movement of self-satisfaction in her. She would on these occasions exclaim, "O my God, either let me die or take this picture from me. I cannot live if I look upon it!" The sight impressed her with an extreme hatred of herself, and as she was not allowed by obedience to exercise on herself the rigour which this feeling suggested to her, she suffered, she says, more than she could express. But in order to compensate as well as she could by obedience and humility, she never failed to accuse herself of her faults that she might receive a penance for them. Any penance, she tells us, however severe, appeared a relief

to her, compared with the punishment which our Lord Himself inflicted on her.

In order the more to purify her soul, our Lord discovered to her defects in what appeared most pure and perfect. This He did more particularly on All Saints' Day, when she heard distinctly the following mysterious words—

No blemish finds a place in innocence ;  
Nothing is lost in power ;  
Nothing passes away in that abode of bliss ;  
All is there perfected in love.\*

These words were afterwards explained to her, and their meaning, she says, occupied her mind for a long time.

“No blemish finds a place in innocence;” that is to say, she was to allow no blemish in her soul or heart. “Nothing is lost in power;” she was to resign and abandon all to Him, for He is power itself, and we can lose nothing in giving all to Him. The last two lines referred to Heaven, where nothing passes away, for all is eternal, and all is perfected there in love. “I was allowed,” she says, “a slight glimpse of this bliss. O God ! into what transports of joy did the sight throw me ! As I was in Retreat at the time, I passed the whole day in this ineffable joy, and it seemed to me in my transport that I had but to go and enter upon it at once. But I heard other words addressed to me, which soon gave me to understand

\* Rien de souillé dans l'innocence ;  
Rien ne se perd dans la puissance ;  
Rien ne se passe en ce beau séjour ;  
Tout s'y consomme dans l'amour.



that I was still far from this. The words were to the following effect—

In vain thy longing heart desires  
To find an entrance there ;  
Who to this heavenly bliss aspires  
On earth the Cross must bear.” \*

She was then shown all that she was to suffer during the remainder of her life. “My whole frame,” she says, “shuddered at the sight, though I did not even then understand it as well as I have since done by my own experience.”

At the same time, in order to comfort her amidst the fears which still troubled her in spite of every assurance she received, and in anticipation of the fulfilment of the promise which He had made, our Lord presented Himself to her, and disclosing to her His Sacred Heart, “This,” He said, “is the Master I give you. It will teach you all you are to do for My love. You shall be, therefore, Its beloved Disciple.” This gave her great joy, and she felt unable afterwards to have recourse to any other succour in her necessities and difficulties. “I prostrated myself,” she says, “in spirit, when I could not do so bodily, in all my exercises. I made Him reparation for the injuries He received from hearts consecrated to Him, and I kept myself in His presence in the character of the beloved Disciple of His Sacred Heart. It was my repose, my retreat, and my strength when I found myself overwhelmed with pains and griefs caused by the sanctity of justice, which

\* C'est en vain que ton cœur soupire  
Pour y entrer comme tu crois ;  
Il ne faut pas qu' on y aspire  
Que par le chemin de la Croix.

brought me to the verge of death. When He saw me reduced to this extremity, 'Come,' He said, 'and take your rest, that you may suffer with greater courage.' " "I felt myself," she says, "at once plunged into this furnace of love, where I thought only of loving Him. I felt myself so strongly urged to this, that it seemed to me my soul was on the point of being separated from my body. My body was so wearied that I could not move one foot before the other. I was obliged to do continual violence to myself, lest it should be perceived. It seemed to me that the quiet of the night was only to allow me to enjoy the converse of my Divine Spouse, with Whom hours passed as though they were minutes."

It was in the character especially of the beloved Disciple of the Sacred Heart, as we have seen, that Margaret Mary was in the habit now of presenting herself before our Lord. She makes mention of an extraordinary favour which she received from Him, and which appears to have special reference to the mission designed for her as Apostle of the Sacred Heart. It was communicated to her upon the Feast of St. John, the beloved Disciple, who at the Last Supper reclined on the Sacred Heart of our Lord. It is possible that this may be the same apparition as that recorded above, in which our Divine Lord allowed Margaret Mary to recline upon His Breast, and disclosed to her the secrets of His Sacred Heart. It is recorded by Margaret Mary herself in an account which she drew up at the express order of her Confessor, Father Rolin, S.J.

"One day," is the account she gives, "on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, 1674, after having received from my Divine Saviour a favour almost similar to that

bestowed upon the beloved Disciple on the evening of the Last Supper, the Divine Heart was represented to me as on a throne of fire and flames, shedding rays on every side, brighter than the sun and transparent as crystal. The Wound which He received upon the Cross appeared there visibly ; a crown of thorns encircled the Divine Heart, and It was surmounted by a cross. These instruments of His Passion signified, as my Divine Master gave me to understand, that it was the unbounded love which He had for men that had been the source of all His sufferings ; that from the first moment of His Incarnation all these torments had been present to Him, and that from the first moment the Cross had been, so to say, planted in His Heart ; that from that moment He accepted all the pains and humiliations which His Sacred Humanity was to suffer during the course of His mortal life, and even the outrages to which His love for men exposed Him till the end of the world in the Blessed Sacrament. He gave me to understand afterwards that it was the great desire He had to be perfectly loved by men that had made Him form the design of disclosing to them His Heart, and of giving them in these latter times this last effort of His love, by proposing to them an object and a means so calculated to engage them to love Him, and love Him solidly, opening to them all the treasures of love, mercy, and grace, of sanctification and salvation which It contains, in order that all who should wish to pay and procure for Him all the honour and love which they can, might be enriched in profusion with the divine treasures, of which It is the fruitful and inexhaustible source."

Margaret Mary mentions also the pleasure which our Divine Lord said He took in seeing His Sacred Heart visibly represented, in order that the hearts of men might be touched and powerfully drawn to Him by the cords of His Sacred Humanity. "He assured me besides," she says, "that He took a singular pleasure in being honoured under the representation of this Heart of flesh, in order, He added, to touch the insensible hearts of men. And He promised me that He would shed in abundance on all who should honour It all the treasures of grace with which It is filled. Wherever this image shall be exposed for special veneration it shall draw down upon the spot every kind of blessing."

"But what caused me a kind of torture," she adds, "and what I felt more keenly than all the pains of which I have spoken, was, as I looked on this amiable Heart, to hear these words : 'I have a burning thirst to be honoured by men in the Blessed Sacrament, and I find hardly any one who strives according to My desire to allay this thirst by making Me some return.'"

This singular favour left an indelible impression on the mind of Margaret Mary, which was renewed more especially each year on the recurrence of the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. About two years before her death, in January, 1689, writing to the Mother de Saumaise, she communicates to her in full confidence her sentiments on the occasion. "It seemed to me, my good Mother," she writes, "that I must melt with confusion and gratitude when, on the day of the Feast of the beloved Disciple of our dear Beloved (Dec. 27, 1688), I called to mind that it was on this day that my

Divine Spouse did me the incomprehensible favour, of which I am so unworthy, of making me repose upon His Breast with His beloved Disciple, and of giving me His Heart, His Cross, and His love. His Heart to be my refuge and haven of rest amidst the tempests of this stormy sea ; His Cross to be my throne of glory, in which I should not only glory but also rejoice, since there is no good for me but Jesus, His Cross, and His love ; His love to purify and consume me, and transform me wholly into Himself."

From the time of this Vision she could not contain the sentiments of ardent love which she felt for Jesus Christ. "I should have wished," she says, "to spread it abroad on every occasion by my words, supposing that others received the same graces as myself and entertained the same sentiments. But I was dissuaded from this by the Reverend Father de La Colombière, as also in consequence of the great opposition I met with in so doing. All the pleasure I had in this, and the advantage which I derived from this little excess of zeal and fervour, consisted in their procuring me some humiliations and a little trial, which lasted several years, for the love of the Sacred Heart."

Margaret Mary here makes mention of Father de La Colombière. It was in him that she was to find the verification of the promise made to her by our Lord, that He would send her His faithful servant, to whom she was to make known the treasures and secrets of His Sacred Heart which had been entrusted to her, and who was to guide her with confidence in His way.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1674—1675.

IT was towards the close of the year 1674, or at the beginning of the following year, that Father de La Colombière came to Paray-le-Monial as Superior of the Residence established by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in that town.

Father Claude de La Colombière, as yet but young, was highly distinguished by natural gifts, but more especially by his zeal and piety. His sermons, as they are handed down to us, are distinguished by high spirituality and depth of thought. He had lately taken an important step in spiritual life, by binding himself by vow to observe with fidelity the rules and constitutions of his Institute. Before taking his final resolution he was able to say : “ It seems to me that for some time I have been living almost as I shall be obliged to live after I have taken this vow, and it is rather from the desire of engaging myself to perseverance than from that of doing anything new and extraordinary that I have entertained this thought.” “ I rely,” he adds, “ neither on my resolution nor on my own strength, but on the goodness of God, which is infinite, and His grace, which He never fails to communicate abundantly, and the more so in proportion as we strive to do more for His service.” Every other testimony to the character of this

holy Religious is superseded by the title by which he was designated to Margaret Mary by our Blessed Lord Himself as "His faithful servant."

The first time that Father de La Colombière saw the Community at Paray, Margaret Mary heard interiorly the words, "This is the person whom I send you." She had soon an opportunity of proving the truth of these words, for, on occasion of the first confession which she made to him, at the season of the Ember Days, during the Lent of 1675, though they had never conversed together, Father de La Colombière spoke with her, as she describes it herself, as if he understood all that was passing in her mind. She did not wish to open her mind to him upon this first interview; but as he saw that she wished to retire for fear of inconveniencing the Community, he told her that, if she pleased, he would come to see her another time and speak with her in the same place. Her natural timidity led her to reply that, not being at her own disposal, she would do whatever obedience should order her.

A short time after, Father de La Colombière, having occasion to give an exhortation to the Community, was struck with the appearance of Margaret Mary, and inquired of the Reverend Mother de Saumaise, after the Conference, who that young Religious was, describing the place which she had occupied. On being informed, he told the Mother Superior that she was a chosen soul. Mother de Saumaise shortly afterwards sent for Father de La Colombière, and desired Margaret Mary to lay open her mind to him. Margaret Mary went as she was desired, though with a feeling of extreme repugnance. This she expressed to Father de La Colombière

on seeing him. He replied "that he was very glad to have given her an opportunity of making a sacrifice for God." "Then, without pain or trouble," she says, "I opened my heart to him, and discovered to him the bottom of my soul, good and bad alike." She received from him in return great consolation. He assured her that she had nothing to fear in the guidance of the Spirit which acted in her, as long as it did not withdraw her from obedience ; that she ought to follow His movement, and abandon herself wholly to His will, to be sacrificed and immolated according to His good pleasure. "He expressed his admiration," she says, "at the goodness of God in not having been repelled by so much resistance on my part. He taught me to value the gifts of God, and to receive with respect and humility the frequent communications and familiar converse with which He favoured me ; adding that I ought to be employed in constant thanksgiving for such great goodness."

Margaret Mary explained to him the inability she felt, in spite of all her efforts, to pray vocally, in consequence of the close union in which our Lord kept her soul absorbed in Him. Father de La Colombière told her to be satisfied with saying such vocal prayers as were of obligation, adding the Rosary when she could. On her describing to him, she says, some of the special caresses and favours which were lavished upon her by her Divine Spouse, and the ineffable union of love which she enjoyed, he told her that she had in this great subject for humiliation, and that he admired herein the great mercy of God in her regard.

But our Lord, who would have her receive no consolation but such as was accompanied by humiliation,



permitted this spiritual communication with Father de La Colombière to be the source of many humiliations to her. Father de La Colombière himself had also much to suffer on her account. It was said that she wished to deceive him also by her illusions, as she had already deceived so many others. "But this," she says, "gave him no trouble. He continued to give me his assistance during the short time he remained in the town, and he has done so ever since. I have been astonished many a time that he did not abandon me as others had done, for the manner in which I treated him would have repulsed any one else." Father de La Colombière, on his part, seeing the great graces with which our Lord favoured Margaret Mary, lost no opportunity, in order to secure these graces to her, of humbling and mortifying her. "This," she remarks, "gave me great pleasure."

Our Lord would give Margaret Mary a further assurance that He had sent Father de La Colombière to assist her in the work for which He designed her, of promoting the Devotion to His Sacred Heart. One day, as Father de La Colombière was saying Mass in the church of the monastery, upon Margaret Mary approaching to receive Holy Communion, our Lord showed her His Sacred Heart as a burning furnace. She saw, at the same time, two hearts on the point of uniting themselves to It, and being absorbed, as it were, in It. She heard also, at the same time, these words: "It is thus that My pure love unites these three hearts for ever." "He gave me to understand," she says, "that this union would be wholly for the glory of His Sacred Heart, the treasures of which He wished that I

should discover to the Father, in order that he might make their true value known ; and that, to this end, He wished that we should be as brother and sister, sharing equally in these spiritual goods." "I hereupon," she adds, "represented to Him my poverty, and the inequality there was between a man of such great virtue and a poor wretched sinner like myself. Upon this He said to me : 'The infinite riches of My Heart will supply for all and make all equal. Let him know this, and fear nothing.' This I accordingly did at our first interview." The sentiments of humility and thanksgiving with which Father de La Colombière received this announcement, as also others concerning himself which she made him on the part of our Lord, struck her so much that she profited by it, she says, more than she could have done by any sermons she might have heard.

Margaret Mary also mentioned to Father de La Colombière the communications she received from our Lord regarding certain souls, to whom He wished her to discover them for His glory, either by word or writing, as He should let her know. She was not to trouble herself about the way of saying or writing them, for He would Himself attach to them the unction of His grace, to produce the effect He intended in those who received them well. She mentioned to Him the repugnance she felt to write some of these communications, which brought on her great humiliations. Father de La Colombière desired her to follow the interior suggestions she should receive on this matter, whatever trouble or humiliations it might cost her ; to say with simplicity what she was inspired to say, to present to

her Mother Superior the notes she had written, and to do what she should order her. "I kept to this advice," she says, "but it brought upon me much abjection on the part of creatures."

Father de La Colombière ordered her also to write an account of what passed within her. This she felt a great repugnance to do. She wrote, however, in order to do what she was told, but afterwards burnt what she had written, persuading herself that, in so doing, she had satisfied obedience. "But I suffered much in consequence," she says. "What was said to me on the subject gave me a scruple about it, and I was forbidden to do so any more."

It was about this time (June, 1675), that Margaret Mary received the last signal favour, in which Father de La Colombière was appointed by name to assist her, relating to the establishment of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. She was ordered by Father de La Colombière to put the account of it in writing, and he quotes this account in the journal of the Retreat which he made shortly after his arrival in London in 1677. It was the publication of the journal of his Retreats after his death which first led to the Devotion becoming generally known.

"Finishing this Retreat," he says, "full of confidence in the mercy of my God, I resolved to procure, by all means in my power, the execution of what had been enjoined me on the part of my adorable Master, by procuring the accomplishment of His desires regarding the Devotion which He has suggested to a person to whom He communicates Himself very confidentially, and for which he has been pleased to make use of my weakness.

"Our Lord having, then, disclosed Himself to this person, who, there is reason to believe, is according to His Heart, from the great favours He has done her, she explained herself to me on the subject. I obliged her to put in writing what she had told me, and I have thought it well to give an account of it myself in the journal of my Retreat, since our Lord wishes to make use of my poor aid in the execution of this design.

"'As I was before the Blessed Sacrament,' says this holy soul, 'on a day within the Octave of Corpus Christi, I received from my God excessive graces of His love. Feeling myself touched with a desire of making Him some return, and of rendering Him love for love, "You cannot make Me any greater return of love," He said, "than by doing what I have so often asked of you." And discovering to me His Divine Heart, "See this Heart," He said, "which has loved men so much that It has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify to them Its love; and in return I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, by reason of the contempt, irreverence, sacrilege, and coldness which they show Me in this Sacrament of Love. But what I feel still more is that they are hearts consecrated to Me who use Me thus. On this account, I ask of you that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special Feast to honour My Heart, by communicating on that day and making reparation to It by a solemn act to repair the indignities which It has received during the time It has been exposed on My altars. I also promise you that My Heart shall expand Itself to shed in abundance the influence of Its divine love upon those

who shall pay It this honour and procure it to be paid.”

“‘But to whom, O Lord, dost Thou address Thyself?’ she said to Him, ‘to a poor creature and so wretched a sinner that her unworthiness would be even capable of hindering the accomplishment of Thy design. Thou hast so many generous souls to execute it.’ ‘What, do you not know,’ said our Divine Lord, ‘that I make use of the weakest instruments to confound the strong, and that it is in the little and the poor of spirit that My power commonly manifests itself with the greatest splendour, in order that they may attribute nothing to themselves?’ ‘Do Thou, then, give me the means,’ she replied, ‘of doing what Thou commandest.’ Upon this, our Lord added—‘Address yourself to My servant N.,\* and tell him from Me to do what he can to establish this Devotion, and to give this pleasure to My Divine Heart. Let him not be discouraged at the difficulties he will meet with, for there will be no lack of them; but he must remember that those are all-powerful who distrust themselves and place their whole confidence in Me.’”

Father de La Colombière was a person of clear discernment and strong judgment, and not inclined to give credence on insufficient grounds; but he was too well satisfied of the solid virtue of Margaret Mary to allow him to fear illusion in this matter. The resolution he now took was only a confirmation of that which he had

\* This was Father de La Colombière: “His servant, whom He had sent to me for the accomplishment of this design,” are the words in which Margaret Mary describes him in the account which she gives of this Vision in her own narrative of her life, drawn up by her by order of Father Rolin, S.J.

seen good grounds for adopting before. He had not waited for the time of his Retreat to carry into effect the wishes of our Divine Lord. In order to lay a solid foundation of the work, he determined to begin with himself, and on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi, which fell this year (1675) on the 21st of June, the Feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, he consecrated himself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This day, the Feast of a Saint, who, according to the testimony of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, was distinguished whilst on earth by his hidden but burning love for the Heart of the Incarnate Word, may be regarded perhaps as that on which this Devotion made its first conquest.

The extraordinary graces which this holy Father received from the practice of this Devotion confirmed him in the idea which he had formed of its solidity and value. He did not fail to inculcate it upon his penitents, and recommended them to communicate on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

His advice and direction during the two years that he remained at Paray were a source of great consolation to Margaret Mary, for whose guidance he had been so specially sent. He instructed her how best to correspond with the designs of our Lord in her regard, and reassured her amidst the great fears she constantly entertained of being deceived. Margaret Mary, on the other hand, was enabled by the supernatural light she received to render him valuable assistance. She spoke of his quitting France some time before his Superiors had entertained the thought of designing him for any such mission. He received, indeed, two contradictory

orders one after the other, and as he was preparing to act upon the last he received a final order to repair to Paris preparatory to crossing to England.

Margaret Mary received this blow with perfect conformity to the will of God, Who had allowed him to render her such service during his residence at Paray. When she was inclined merely to allow her thoughts to dwell momentarily upon it, our Lord reproached her, saying—"What! am I not sufficient for you, I Who am your first beginning and last end?" "This was enough," she says, "to lead me to abandon myself entirely to Him."

Before his departure for England, Father de La Colombière left with her the following brief but comprehensive instruction for her guidance:—

"Remember," he says, "that God asks of you everything and nothing. He asks everything, because He would reign over you and within you, as in what belongs wholly to Him, so as to dispose of all, that nothing may resist Him, everything bend to Him and obey the least sign of His will. He asks nothing of you, because He would do everything in you, without your interfering in anything, contenting yourself with being the subject on which and in which He acts, in order that all the glory may be His, and that He alone may be known, praised, and loved for ever."

Father de La Colombière received, on his part, from Margaret Mary some notes of instruction, which served to guide him in the important work on which he was entering. We shall have occasion to see of what incalculable advantage they proved to him amidst the numerous embarrassments with which he found himself beset in his new and perilous mission.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1676—1677.

IT was indeed a difficult and delicate mission on which Father de La Colombière was engaged. The position of Chaplain to the Duchess of York at the English Court demanded singular prudence, zeal, courage, and superior abilities as a preacher. Had we no other testimony regarding Father de La Colombière, the fact of his being selected by his Superiors for this post would alone supply sufficient evidence of the opinion they entertained of his merits.

The strong Protestant feeling in England, though apparently somewhat allayed by the return of the Stuarts, had burst forth afresh, and culminated shortly afterwards in the introduction of the Prince of Orange by the revolution of 1688. The conditions of the Test Act had obliged the Duke of York, from motives of conscience, to resign the command of the fleet, and the Duchess of York, Mary of Modena, was refused by the King the use of a public chapel, which had been guaranteed to her by the terms of her marriage contract. Father St. Germain, a French Jesuit, who had attended her as Chaplain, was forced to return to France to place his life in safety. We may judge, then, what treatment might be looked for by his successor. We know what were the penalties attached to the crime of being a Catholic, and yet more a Jesuit. It was death for any



English subject convicted of having received Holy Orders at the hands of a Catholic Bishop; imprisonment for assisting at Mass even in the Queen's chapel. The Queen, Catherine of Portugal, was, like the Duchess of York, a pious Catholic. Thus, strange to say, the three persons nearest to the throne professed the proscribed religion. Charles II. himself, as is now satisfactorily established by historical documents, had secretly abjured Protestantism; but this, instead of favouring the Church, only served as an inducement to the weak monarch, in order to avoid suspicion, to sanction atrocities against Catholics worthy of the worst days of Elizabeth and Henry VIII.

Such was the perilous post to which Father de La Colombière was called on quitting the humble Residence of Paray-le-Monial. It was here that he began to fulfil the engagements he had entered into with the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and experienced in return the tender love and generosity of the Sacred Heart.

Arriving in London on the 13th of October, 1676, he lived in his apartments in St. James' Palace as a true Religious. His great consolation he found in his Rules, to which he had bound himself so closely, and he observed them as faithfully as he would have done in a House of his Order. "I find in them," he says, in one of his letters, "so many advantages that, were I alone upon an island at the extremity of the world, I could, it seems to me, do without all else, and that I should desire no other help, provided God gave me grace to keep them. Happy is he who can treasure them up in his heart, and appreciate all they contain."\*

\* Father Claude de La Colombière : *Spiritual Letters*. 1715.

After he had been about ten months in London, he wrote to his brother: "Amidst the general corruption which heresy has produced in this great city, I meet with numerous examples of fervent and perfect virtue, a rich harvest ready for the sickle, and which falls beneath the hand which God is pleased to make use of for His purpose. The Princess whom I serve is thoroughly good in every sense of the word, most exemplary for her piety, and of a most amiable disposition. For myself, I am as quiet in the midst of the tumult of the Court as if I were in a desert, and it is my own fault if I am not as much under Rule as in one of our own Houses."

He preached two Lents before the Duchess of York, as well as on the Sundays and Feasts during eighteen months. He received the praise which his sermons elicited with a coldness which checked it, and he added to the vows he had already taken another, never to say anything which could turn to his own praise. The zeal with which he burnt gave him no respite in his labours for the good of souls. We have, unfortunately, no historical record of the details of his apostolical life, but we may form some judgment of their fruits from the titles applied to him by Blessed Margaret Mary in the litany which she composed in his honour, and which she used to recite after his death. She addressed him as *Voice of an Apostle, Buckler of the Catholic Faith, Destroyer of Heresy*. She declared that, "He had employed all his eloquence in making known the greatness of God, converting sinners to penance, and drawing heretics to a true conversion."

The greatest and most constant source of grief to

Father de La Colombière in London was to live in a country in which the Blessed Sacrament was so outraged. The Test Act attacked directly the doctrine of the Real Presence of our Blessed Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The circumstances, then, in which he lived led him to call to mind in a special manner all that our Lord expected of him, and all that He had intimated to him through Margaret Mary respecting the wishes of His Sacred Heart. In the journal of the Retreat which he made shortly after his arrival in London, and part of which has been quoted above, he writes as follows : “I determined to procure in every way in my power the execution of what had been enjoined me by my adorable Master in regard of His precious Body in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, in which I believe Him to be truly and really present. Touched with compassion for those poor blinded souls who refuse to submit to believe this great and ineffable Mystery, I would gladly shed my blood to persuade them of this truth which I believe and profess. In this country, which prides itself on doubting Thy real presence in the august Sacrament, I feel a great consolation in making several times a day acts of faith regarding the reality of Thy adorable Body under the appearance of bread and wine.” And a little further on : “I have understood that God wishes me to serve Him by procuring the accomplishment of His desires in regard of the Devotion which He has suggested to a person to whom He communicates Himself very confidentially, and for which He has been pleased to make use of my weakness. I have already recommended it to many persons in England, and I have written regarding it to

France, and begged of one of my friends to make it known in the place where he is. . . . Would, O my God, that I could publish everywhere what it is that Thou lookest for from Thy servants and friends.

“God, then, having made Himself known to this person, who, there is reason to believe, is according to His Heart, on account of the great graces which He has conferred upon her, she spoke on the subject to me, and I obliged her to put in writing what she had said to me. I have wished to mention this in the journal of my Retreats, seeing that our good God wishes to make use of my poor services in carrying out His designs.”

Then follows the account of the revelation made to Margaret Mary during the Octave of Corpus Christi in the year 1675; which has been already given in the preceding chapter. Hereupon Father de La Colombière renews the offering of himself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and concludes with the following prayer :

“O Sacred Heart of Jesus, do Thou teach me an entire forgetfulness of myself, since there is no other way of entering into Thee. Grant that I may do nothing that is not worthy of Thee. Teach me what I ought to do to attain to Thy pure love, with the desire of which Thou hast inspired me. I feel in myself a great wish to please Thee, and a great inability to do so without a special light and assistance, which I can look for only from Thee. Do Thou accomplish Thy will, O Lord, in me. I oppose it, I know well ; but I would fain not do so. It is for Thee, O Divine Heart of Jesus, to do all ; Thine alone shall be the glory of my sanctification if I become a Saint. This is as clear to me as the day.

It will be greatly to Thy glory ; and it is for this alone that I desire to be perfect. Amen."

Preaching on the Feast of Corpus Christi, in St. James' Chapel, he turns from the remembrance of the ingratitude of mankind in regard of this adorable Sacrament of Love, to the thought of the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord as the only means of making reparation and return. "What wilt Thou do then, O Lord," he asks, "to conquer such hardness of heart? Thou hast exhausted Thyself in this Mystery of Love ; Thou hast gone as far, the holy Fathers tell us, as Thy power can reach. If the sacred touch of Thy Body is unable to destroy this infernal spell, we cannot hope that any other remedy will have the power." But the thought of the Sacred Heart presents itself to his mind, and he concludes as follows: "I see but one remedy for so great an evil. Thou must Thyself, O God, give us a new heart in place of a marble and iron heart, a heart that is capable of feeling ; Thou must Thyself give us Thy own Heart. O amiable Heart of Jesus ! do Thou take possession of my heart, and kindle within it a love which may correspond, if it be possible, to the obligation I am under of loving God. Do Thou love Jesus in me as Thou hast loved me in Him ; grant that I may live only in Him and for Him, in order that I may live with Him in Heaven."

Whilst Father de La Colombière was thus spreading the divine fire of the Sacred Heart in England, Margaret Mary was aiding him by her prayers and the instructions which she communicated to him from time to time as she received light from Heaven respecting the difficulties in which he was placed. Father de La Colombière

continued on his part to direct her. He wrote, indeed, but rarely to her, and he had in view not so much to direct her as to confirm her in humility. He kept up, however, a regular correspondence with the Rev. Mother de Saumaise. All the letters on either side passed through her hands, and thus this wise Superior was able to attest the following facts regarding them, which she has herself left recorded in the memoir written by her after the death of Blessed Margaret Mary.

The note which Father de La Colombière had received from Margaret Mary at his departure from Paray contained the three following points :—

1. "Father de La Colombière's talent is to lead souls to God ; the devils will therefore do all they can against him. - He will meet with trouble even from persons consecrated to God, who will not approve of what he will say in his sermons to bring souls to God ; but His goodness will be his support under his crosses, in proportion to the confidence he places in Him.

2. "He should have compassion and gentleness for sinners, and employ force only when God shall let him know.

3. "Let him have a great care not to draw the good from its source.\* This is a brief saying, but it contains a great deal, which God will enable him to understand according to the application he bestows upon it."

What an assistance this note proved to him in the difficult position in which he was placed will appear from a letter which he wrote to Mother de Saumaise,

\* "Qu' il ait grand soin de ne point tirer le bien de sa source." The expression is obscure in the original, as is indeed implied in the subsequent account.

dated Feb. 7, 1677, a few days after the first Retreat which he made in London. "You will be glad to hear," he says, "that the note which you gave me at my departure was filled with almost as many mysteries as words. I did not understand the meaning of it until making my Retreat, ten days ago. Our Lord had indeed omitted nothing, and had provided me with preservatives against every evil which could happen to me. It would take me too long," he says, "to tell you all the treasures which I have discovered in this short notice. All that I can say is, that if it is the evil spirit who dictated it, he acts very much against himself, considering that I have derived from it such great help against his attacks, and that it produces in me all the effects which the Holy Spirit is wont to produce." "I mentioned to you in my last letter," he writes again in the following month, "several very remarkable circumstances connected with this paper, but it is impossible for me to tell you all I feel regarding them."

As regards the three several points contained in the paper, the first point, he thought, when considering them during his Retreat, towards the end of January, 1677, had only been in part realised. This he mentioned in the letter which he wrote to Mother de Saumaise after his Retreat. "All has been verified," he says, "with the exception of the persecution spoken of in the first point, which a person consecrated to God was to raise against me. For, as regards those which the devil was to raise against me, there is indeed no kind of snare that he has not laid for me." Upon this remark being communicated by Mother de Saumaise to Margaret Mary, she replied that she still continued

confirmed in the same view. Father de La Colombière was not long in recognising the justice of the view taken by Margaret Mary. "You have good reason," he writes to Mother de Saumaise, "to tell me that our dear Sister Alacoque remained firm in her opinion regarding the contents of the first point of the first note, the same which you gave me on my leaving. I had need of this notice exactly at the time you wrote to me. I think it regarded the Ecclesiastic who was to give me trouble concerning what I said in order to draw souls to God. Up to that time I had not seen this verified. But it has happened at length with regard to the person whom I mentioned to you as having given herself to God without it having cost any trouble. I bethought myself of it, thanks be to God, just in time on the first occasion. This helped greatly to strengthen me; for I was tempted to give up all for fear of an outburst which might have given scandal and injured charity."

As regards the two other points; "The second and third points," he says, writing to Mother de Saumaise, "were of the greatest importance for the repose of my life, and my perfection. I imagined at first, and I continued so to think for three months, that they were only general instructions intended for my whole life; but I have had reason to understand that they were counsels for present occasions, and remedies against thoughts and plans which troubled me and were much opposed to those of God."

"It is only a fortnight ago," he writes again, "that I came to understand the two points of the paper which I brought from Paray, in which I was recommended to be gentle and compassionate with sinners. I do not



doubt that this has reference to the first person who presented herself to me after my arrival. Our Lord sees clearly the need I have of being forewarned."

As regards the third point in particular, he had been for a long time unable to understand the meaning of the words, "Let him have a great care not to draw the good from its source." It was only during his Retreat that he came to understand it. "It is true," he says in the journal of the Retreat, "that I had often examined the expression without being able to understand it. To-day (the fifth day of his Retreat), having remarked that it was said that God would enable me to understand it according as I should apply my mind to it, I meditated for a considerable time upon it without discovering any other meaning than that I should refer to God all the good He was pleased to do by my means. But after having with difficulty turned my thoughts aside from this consideration, suddenly a light was poured in as it were on my mind, and I saw clearly that it supplied the solution of a doubt which had troubled me during the first two or three days of my Retreat on the subject of my pension.\* I understood that this expression comprised, indeed, a great deal, for it led me to the perfection of poverty." "I cannot tell you," he says,

\* This was a pension which Father de La Colombière received from his family, and which might have been of great assistance to him under the extraordinary circumstances in which he was placed.

Father de La Colombière had, indeed, already bound himself by vow to observe the counsel thus mysteriously imparted to him before he was led to understand the meaning of the words in which it was conveyed. "What is very admirable in this, and what makes me see how good Thou art, O my God," he writes in the journal of his Retreat, "is that Thou gavest me the grace to bind

writing shortly afterwards to Mother de Saumaise, "the joy which this light gave me."

Mother de Saumaise continued from time to time to communicate to Father de La Colombière the notes which were sent him by Margaret Mary. She used her own judgment, however, as to the time of sending them, and we shall see from the following fact in what manner Margaret Mary was guided in the advice she gave him, and also, from the letters of Father de La Colombière, in what esteem he held the advice which he received from her. On one occasion, Mother de Saumaise, as we learn from her own account, kept the note which Margaret Mary had given her to send to Father de La Colombière; but observing, from what he wrote to her, that he stood in need of the advice contained in it, without speaking of the matter to any one, she made a copy of the note, intending to send it to the Father. Upon this, Margaret Mary came to her, and told her that, since she thought well to send the note to Father de La Colombière, no change should be made in it. Mother de Saumaise was greatly surprised, and on reading over again what she had written, she found that she had in fact, by mistake, made rather an important change in the copy. "I cannot tell you," Father de La Colombière writes to Mother de Saumaise, in November, 1677, "what consolation your letter has given me. The note of Sister

myself by vow to follow this counsel before enabling me to understand it. I cannot say what joy, what sentiments of gratitude, what confidence in God, what courage this has given me. . . . Praised for ever be our Lord, Who would thus manifest to me His mercy, and the sanctity of the person through whom He has been pleased to give me these counsels."

Alacoque has given me great strength, and reassures me on the subject of numberless doubts which present themselves to me every day. I am in great difficulty regarding what it is she desires of me, and I do not know what answer to give her. Our Lord does not discover Himself to me as He does to her, and I am far from giving her advice in anything. Nevertheless, to satisfy her humility, I will write to her to-day." In the April of the following year, 1678, he writes: "I thank you most humbly for the letter of Sister Alacoque. I will answer her, and if you think it well to give her the answer, do so, but if not, do what you please with it. I am greatly edified with all that she writes to me; and am so strongly confirmed in my belief of what our Lord discovers to her, either as regards the past or the future, that I think I have no longer any merit in believing." "I do not think," he writes in the following May, "that, without the note containing the instructions of Sister Alacoque, I could ever have borne the troubles which I endured, and which never attacked me with greater violence than when I was pressed and in a manner overwhelmed with work." "We must indeed refer our success," he writes again the same month, "to Him Who can make our labours succeed, according to the salutary advice sent me once by Sister Alaccque. I have received three or four such notices from her, and they serve me as a rule for my conduct, and form all the happiness of my life. Blessed for ever be God, who deigns to enlighten us poor blind creatures by the lights of those who communicate most intimately with Him."

In June he writes again: "Sister Alacoque's letter

has caused me great confusion. But I cannot tell you how opportunely her advice has come. Had she read the very bottom of my soul she could not have said anything more exactly to the purpose."

Such was the opinion entertained by Father de La Colombière of the advice he received from Margaret Mary. We see no less clearly from his letters the esteem in which he held her sanctity. Writing to Mother de Saumaise from London in November, 1676, about a month after his arrival, he says: "We do not meet here with Daughters of Holy Mary, and much less with a Sister Alacoque; but God is to be found everywhere where we seek Him, and He claims our love no less in London than at Paray. I thank Him with all my heart for the favour He confers upon me in my being remembered by that holy Religious. I do not doubt that her prayers bring great graces upon me." "What joy all that you say regarding this good Sister gives me!" he writes in the November of the following year; "how admirable and how amiable is God, in His Saints!" "I would gladly," he writes again, "reply to the letter of the holy Sister Alacoque, which has edified me extremely; but I feel quite incapable of saying anything to her, and I fear so much interrupting her interior occupation that I cannot make up my mind to follow my own inclination. I regard her as most wise and enlightened, and am persuaded that God communicates Himself to her in a most particular manner."

A few months before his return to France, Father de La Colombière wrote to Mother de Saumaise, during September, 1678, in terms which showed that he was quite unaware at the time of the circumstances which

were soon to determine his quitting England. "What makes me believe," he says, "that I shall be here still for some time is that fresh fruit is presenting itself for cultivation, and that our good Sister Alacoque speaks to me only of fresh labours. I received your letter, and the enclosed paper in her handwriting, on the very day that I had spoken to the physician, and at a time that I found myself so weak and prostrate that I felt hardly fit for the labours which I foresee next year, and I looked upon my ailment as an effect of the providence of God, Who, knowing my inability to bear the burden, wished to withdraw me from this country. I had made up my mind to this; but after having read the note which desired me not to lose courage on account of difficulties, and bade me remember that whoever trusts in God is all-powerful, I began to change my mind, and to think that I should still remain here."

Strengthened then by the prayers and advice of his holy assistant, Father de La Colombière exhibited in his apostolic life a wonderful combination of the most active and ardent zeal with the greatest interior recollection. It is remarkable, indeed, to observe the change that had taken place in him as recorded by himself in the journal of his Retreats. Before his coming to Paray-le-Monial, in the very Retreat in which he had taken the generous step of binding himself by vow to the observance of his Rule, he had written as follows: "I did not feel any very great zeal to labour for the salvation of my neighbour, when I considered the second of our Rules. It seems to me that I have had more at other times. I do not know if I deceive myself, but I think that what cools me most on this point is the fear I

have of seeking myself in the employments in which this zeal is shown. For it seems to me that there is none in which nature does not find her account, especially when one succeeds, as we should desire to do, for the glory of God. It requires great grace and great strength to resist the charm which is found in changing hearts, and in the confidence reposed in us by persons whose hearts we have touched." "As regards what commonly terrifies nature," he writes again, "such as prisons, constant sickness, even death itself, all this appears to me pleasant compared with the perpetual war which has to be waged against oneself, with that vigilance which must be exercised against the surprises of the world and of self-love, and with this dying life in the midst of the world. When I think of this, life, it seems to me, will be terribly long, and death will never come soon enough."

How different is what he writes in his Retreat of 1677: "I find myself," he says, "in quite an opposite disposition to what I was in two years ago. I was then wholly possessed by fear, and I did not feel at all drawn to works of zeal, from the apprehension I was in of not being able to escape the snares of an active life, in which I saw that my vocation would engage me. Now the fear is all gone, and everything in me leads me to labour for the salvation and sanctification of souls. It seems to me that I wish to live only for this, and that I desire to become a Saint only because it is an admirable means of gaining many hearts to Jesus Christ." "When left to myself," he writes again towards the end of his journal, "I feel, by the infinite mercy of God, in a liberty of heart which gives me incomparable joy. I feel raised above all the monarchs of the earth

by the honour I enjoy of belonging wholly to God. I feel that to know and love Him is better than to reign, and though I have sometimes thoughts of ambition and vainglory, certainly all the glory of the world, apart from the knowledge and love of God, would not tempt me."

Such was the wonderful change wrought by our Lord in Father de La Colombière after he had once given himself wholly to Him by the consecration which, at the instance of Margaret Mary, he made of himself to His Sacred Heart.

## CHAPTER XV.

1676—1678.

WHILST Margaret Mary was thus supporting Father de La Colombière in his apostolic labours by her prayers and counsels, she continued to offer herself to Almighty God in sacrifice in the retirement of the cloister. Our Lord continued on His part to lavish His graces upon her, and prepared her especially to fulfil that character of victim to His offended justice which He had not ceased from the beginning of her religious life to foreshadow to her.

With a view, as it would seem, to this, He appeared to her one day and offered her in the following Vision the choice of a happy or a suffering life. "One day," as she describes the occurrence herself, "this only love of my soul presented Himself to me, bearing in one hand the picture of the happiest life which one can imagine to oneself for a religious soul, a life of peace and interior and exterior consolation, joined to perfect health, the applause and esteem of creatures, and the enjoyment of all one can conceive agreeable to nature; in the other hand He bore the picture of a poor and abject life, constantly crucified by every kind of humiliation, contempt, and contradiction, and constantly suffering in body and soul. Presenting to me



these two pictures, 'Choose, My Daughter,' He said, "which you prefer. I will give you the same graces whichever of the two you choose.'" Margaret Mary's love for our Lord was too great to allow of her making any choice. She replied that she wished only for Him, and that she would only choose what He should choose for her Himself. Our Lord would, however, try her still farther, and He pressed her to make a choice. Still, however, her reply was that He alone was sufficient for her, and she begged of Him to do with her whatever would be most for His glory. "Do what Thou pleasest," she said, "and it is enough for me." Our Lord, satisfied at length, expressed His approbation of her choice, and promised to reward it by giving her Himself. He told her that she had chosen, like Magdalen, the better part, and that it should not be taken from her, for He would be Himself her inheritance for ever. Presenting her then with the picture of a suffering life, "This," He said, "is what I have chosen for you. It is this which pleases Me most, both for the accomplishment of My designs, and also in order to make you like Myself. The other is a life of enjoyment, and not of merit; it is reserved for eternity." Margaret Mary accepted the picture of a dying and suffering life, and kissed the hand which presented it to her. Though she shuddered, as she says, at the sight, she embraced it with affection and pressed it to her heart. It appeared, as she describes it, to impress itself on her whole being, and she seemed to herself as though she were no longer anything but a compound of all that she had seen represented in it. Still, true to the lessons of obedience she had received, she left the final decision to her Mother Superior. "I

left the judgment of all," she adds, "to my Mother Superior, from whom I could conceal nothing."

Our Lord had confided Margaret Mary, as we have seen, to His Blessed Mother from her earliest years. The Blessed Virgin would therefore take part in making known to her chosen Daughter the office she was to fulfil. With this view, she disclosed to her in a Vision some of the defects of the Community for which our Lord wished her to make reparation. "I received," she says, "great proofs of her protection on the day of her glorious Assumption. She showed me a crown which she had made for herself of all her holy Daughters who had followed in her steps, and gave me to understand that it had been her wish to appear adorned with it in the presence of the Blessed Trinity. But it was a great sorrow to her, she told me, that whilst she wished to quit the earth, she found these flowers with which she had adorned herself still attached to it, so that there remained only fifteen. Of these, five were received as Spouses of her Son."

"Another time," she says, "she showed me the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a fountain of living water, from whence flowed five channels into five hearts of this Community, which He had chosen to fill with this divine stream. Below were five others which received a good deal, but through their fault they allowed the precious water to escape."

The special work of reparation, however, to which she was called was still more clearly indicated to Margaret Mary on the following occasion. "Another time," she says, "I was shown five hearts which this loving Heart was ready to reject, and regarded with horror.

Far, however, from desiring to know what this meant, I begged that I might know nothing regarding it. I shed many tears, saying: 'Thou mayest destroy and annihilate me, O my God, but I will not leave Thee until Thou hast granted me the conversion of these hearts.'"

These same five hearts were shown to her on several occasions. On one occasion our Lord invited her in a special manner to take upon herself the charge of restoring them to His favour and love. "Charge yourself with this burden," were His words to her, "and share in the bitterness of My Heart. Shed tears of sorrow over the insensibility of these hearts which I chose in order to consecrate them to My love; or else leave them to be lost, and come and share My delights." "I put aside, however," she says, "all thought of any such consolation, and gave full vent to my tears, regarding myself as charged with these hearts which were on the point of being deprived of love. I prostrated myself frequently before the Sovereign Goodness, and presented to Him those hearts, that they might be filled with His divine love." "But I had to suffer much," she remarks, "before this was accomplished. Hell itself is not more dreadful than a heart deprived of the love of my Beloved."

As our Lord allowed Himself in His infinite condescension to be tempted by the devil, so He would allow Margaret Mary to be assailed by him with the same temptations. Our Lord reminds us by this ineffable mystery of love on His part, that "we have not a High-Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we

are, without sin.”\* In like manner, perhaps, as He designed Margaret Mary for the work of reparation, He would fit her for this work by giving her through temptation a greater sense of compassion for others. And as it is said of Him, “in that wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is able to succour them also that are tempted,”† perhaps it was His will that through temptation she might also have greater power to help those for whom she was to make reparation.

It was whilst she was watching during the night between Thursday and Friday that our Lord told her that Satan had asked permission to try her, as gold in the furnace, in the crucible of contradictions, humiliations, temptations, and dereliction, and that He had given permission for all temptations but those of impurity. He would never allow him to give her any trouble on that point, as He had never allowed him in the least to attack Him. But as regards all the other temptations she was to be on her guard, especially those of pride, despair, and gluttony, “of which,” she says, “I had a greater horror than of death.” Our Lord assured her at the same time that He would protect her Himself as an impregnable fortress. Her principal care, He told her, should be to watch over her exterior; the care of her interior He reserved to Himself.

The devil first endeavoured to terrify her by his threats. He presented himself to her under the form of a hideous negro, his eyes sparkling like two burning coals. Gnashing his teeth at her, “Accursed that you are,” he said, “I will catch you, and if I once have

\* Hebr. iv. 15.

† Hebr. ii. 18.

you in my power I will make you feel what I can do." He made her many other threats of the same kind. "But I did not fear him at all," she says, "so powerfully did I feel myself strengthened from within. It even seemed to me that I should not have feared all the fury of hell with the help of a little crucifix to which my Sovereign Redeemer had attached the power of keeping all the infernal furies at a distance from me. I wore it upon my heart night and day, and received great assistance from it."

The office to which she was appointed at this time—that of assistant in the Infirmary\*—gave her many opportunities of suffering, both in consequence of her naturally quick and sensitive character, and also from difference of disposition in others. The devil also would often annoy her by making her fall and break what she was carrying. He would then laugh at her for her clumsiness, and tell her that she would never be fit for anything. He often also plunged her into sadness and dejection, and endeavoured at the same time to prevent her discovering her state to the Mother Superior.

The Mother Superior would mortify and humble her severely when any accident of the kind above-

\* This was the second time that Margaret Mary was placed in this charge under Sister Catherine Augustine Marest. This good and indefatigable Sister expected as much from others as she did herself. But she could not refuse her tribute of admiration to Margaret Mary. She deposed in 1715, "that having been Infirmary with the servant of God, she was constantly edified by the eagerness she manifested to serve the sick Sisters in all that was most repugnant to nature, and that the Venerable Sister, when sick herself, bore the most acute sufferings with great patience. She thought less of her own pain than of the trouble she gave the Infirmarians, and she was always apprehensive of tiring them."

mentioned happened, and would require her to tell her fault in the Refectory. She cheerfully performed the penance imposed on her, in order to repair by it any breach of poverty she might have caused.

One day, as she was carrying a pan of burning coals, the devil threw her down from the top to the bottom of the stairs. None of the fire was spilt, and she was not at all hurt, whilst those who saw her fall thought that she must have broken her legs.\* “I felt,” she says, “that my Guardian Angel was supporting me.”

Margaret Mary, not satisfied with the numerous opportunities of suffering presented to her, constantly sought for more by voluntary mortification. “My sensitive and proud nature,” she says, “furnished me with abundant opportunities. My Sovereign Master would not allow me to lose any occasion, and when He wished anything of me, He pressed me so strongly that I was obliged to yield. My resistance only made me suffer more.”

She mentions in particular an instance of a heroic victory gained over her own natural repugnance in her attendance on the sick. “If I had a thousand bodies, a thousand loves, and a thousand lives,” she said to our Lord, “I would sacrifice them all in order to serve Thee.” Our Lord, Who is not behindhand in rewarding a hundredfold any sacrifice which is made for Him, rewarded this heroic act by giving her such spiritual consolation that she would gladly have repeated it, she says, every day. He rewarded her still farther by the following signal favour. “The

\* This fact was attested by several of the Sisters of the Community in the depositions made in 1715.

following night," she says, "He allowed me for two or three hours to hold my mouth close to the Wound of His Sacred Heart." "It would be very difficult for me," she remarks, "to express what I then felt, or what marvellous effects this grace produced in my soul. What I have said is enough to make known the great mercies of my God."

Our Lord would not, however, lessen her natural sensibility, that she might be reminded of that repugnance which He had condescended to feel in His Agony in the Garden. He would also allow her sometimes even to fail, in order that she might learn to have a greater distrust of herself, and to rely with greater confidence on Him. "It was then," she says, "that this Sovereign Good of my soul came to my assistance, and, like a loving Father, held out to me the arms of His love, saying to me: 'You know then, now, that you can do nothing without Me?'"

On another occasion, also, she overcame her natural delicacy in a similar manner. Our Lord hereupon said to her: "It is very good of you to do this." "I do it, my Divine Master," she replied to Him, "in order to please Thee, and to gain Thy Divine Heart, and I hope Thou wilt not refuse It me. But what hast Thou not done, my adorable Redeemer, to gain the hearts of men, and yet they refuse them to Thee, and often drive Thee from them." "It is true, My Daughter," He replied, "that My love has made Me sacrifice Myself for them and that they make Me no return, but I wish you to supply, by the merits of My Sacred Heart, for their ingratitude."

It was now that our Lord distinctly made known to

her His wish that she should, in the character of victim, satisfy His offended justice. "I wish to give you My Heart," He said to her, "but first you must make yourself a victim of immolation, to turn aside by your intervention the chastisements which the divine justice of My Father is ready to inflict in His anger on a Religious Community."

This Community, which would seem to be her own, was shown to her with the particular defects which had irritated God against it, and she was told also what she was to suffer in order to appease His wrath. "As this was represented to me," she says, "I shuddered through and through, and I had not the courage to make the sacrifice of myself." She replied that, not being at her own disposal, she could not do it without the consent of obedience. She shrunk, however, from speaking to her Mother Superior, so great was the dread she felt at the thought of the sacrifice she was called on to make. She was pursued, meanwhile, unceasingly by the interior reproaches of our Lord, and she could find no rest. She shed many tears, and at length felt herself obliged to mention all to her Mother Superior. Margaret Mary was ordered by her to make an entire sacrifice of herself, as our Lord required of her; but she continued still to resist. "At last," as she describes the circumstances herself, "on the eve of the Presentation (of the Blessed Virgin), the divine justice appeared to me armed in such terrors that I was quite out of myself."

She was told, like St. Paul, that it was hard for her to resist the divine power; and that, since she had made such resistance, in order to avoid the humi-



liation proposed to her, our Lord would increase it two-fold. She had been asked to make a sacrifice in secret, but now it should be public, and in a manner and at a time which would be incomprehensible to human reason, and under circumstances so humiliating that it would be a subject of confusion to her for the rest of her life. "I very soon," she says, "experienced the effect of these words. I never was in such a state. The following will give some slight idea of it."

She then describes the occurrence. It was on the eve of the Presentation of our Lady, the 20th November, 1677. At the end of the evening prayer she felt unable to leave with the rest of the Community, and remained until the signal for supper, shedding tears and overwhelmed with grief. She went to take her collation with the Community, and dragged herself, as it were, by main force to the Refectory. She here felt strongly urged to make the sacrifice of herself aloud, in the manner she understood our Lord to wish it of her. With this view she left the Refectory (the Mother Superior happening at the time to be unwell), in order to obtain permission to do so. She felt, however, almost deprived of all power of motion, and seemed, as she describes it herself, like one whose hands and feet were tied, with nothing left free to her but her tears, which she shed in abundance. "I felt," she says, "like the greatest criminal dragged to the place of punishment. I beheld the sanctity of God armed with the bolts of His just anger, and ready to hurl them to destroy me. It seemed as though I saw hell opened to swallow me up. I felt burning with a devouring fire, even to the marrow of my bones. My whole body trembled. The

only words I could utter were : 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to the greatness of Thy mercies.'"

Plunged in this mysterious state of suffering, it was nearly eight o'clock before she could reach the room of the Mother Superior, and she was then conducted to it by a Sister, who had found her on the way. The Mother Superior was greatly surprised to see her in this condition, and Margaret Mary was unable to explain to her the cause of it. What added to her pain was that she thought that every one must know what was passing within her.

Knowing the power of obedience over her, the Mother Superior ordered her to tell the cause of her trouble. Margaret Mary, upon this, at once declared to her the sacrifice which our Lord wished her to make of herself in the presence of the Community, and the reason for which He demanded it. "This," she says in her narrative, "I will not express more particularly, for fear of wounding holy charity, and with it the Heart of Jesus Christ, in which this virtue takes its rise."

What it was precisely that our Lord required of her Margaret Mary does not explain more definitely ; but she did and said, she tells us, all that He desired of her.

Very different judgments were naturally formed of her conduct in this matter. It would have appeared mysterious, of course, to all, but those hearts which were most closely united with the Sacred Heart of our Lord would have been most privileged to read the mystery aright. "But I leave all this," she says, "to the mercy of my God. What I can affirm is that I never suffered so much." "It seems to me," she adds,

“that if all the sufferings which I had endured up to that time, and all those which I have endured since, were put together and were to continue to my death, they would not bear any comparison with what I endured during that night.” Our Lord would allow her to have some experience of the night of ignominy which He passed before His Passion. She was dragged from one side to another to different parts of the house, amidst a scene of frightful confusion.

The night thus passed, as Margaret Mary describes it, in torments known only to God, and without any repose till about the time of Mass. As she assisted at it, she seemed to hear the following words: “At length peace is restored, and My sanctity of justice is satisfied by the sacrifice you have made Me, in order to honour that which I made at the moment of My Incarnation in the womb of My Mother. I wish to join the merit of your sacrifice to Mine, and to apply it in favour of charity in the manner I have declared to you. Henceforth you must no longer claim anything for yourself in all that you do or suffer—either by way of merit, or in satisfaction, or in any other way, but all must be sacrificed to My good pleasure in favour of charity. You must therefore, in imitation of Me, act and suffer in silence, without any other interest than the glory of God, and the establishment of the reign of My Sacred Heart in the hearts of men, to whom I wish to manifest It by your means.”

This communication was made to her after Holy Communion. Our Lord would, however, still leave her in her state of suffering. But in the midst of it she enjoyed great peace, for she received all, as she tells

us, from His hand, and He instructed her that she should be ready to suffer in this manner to the day of judgment, should such be the will of God. She appeared to herself an object of contradiction, and a sink, as she expresses it, of contempt and humiliation. She could neither eat nor sleep. "My most pleasing occupation was," she says, "to remain prostrate before my God, Whose sovereign greatness kept me, as it were, annihilated in the lowest depth of my misery. I constantly wept and groaned, to beg mercy of Him, and to turn aside His just anger."

In the midst of these interior sufferings she would not be dispensed from any part of her work, or from the observance of any of her Rules. She felt, as she tells us, as though the sovereign power of our Lord dragged her as a criminal from one place of punishment to another. She met with torture everywhere, and she felt so absorbed and swallowed up in suffering that she had, as it were, no spirit or life, except to see and feel her afflictions and pains. "All this, however," she says, "caused me no uneasiness or annoyance."

As it was observed that she did not eat, the Mother Superior, or, more probably, perhaps, a Sister who acted in her place, and her Confessor, ordered her to eat whatever was set before her at table. This seemed to her beyond her power. Our Lord, however, she says, gave her strength to obey, and she did as she was told, but after each repast she was seized with vomiting. This continued a long time, and her stomach was so weakened by it that the same effect still remained even after she had been dispensed from this order, and told that she might take what she could.

“From this time,” she says, “eating became to me a torment. I went to the Refectory as to a place of punishment, to which I had been condemned for my sins. I endeavoured to eat indifferently all that was presented to me, but I could not prevent myself always taking the least, and what was most in conformity with my poverty and nothingness. It was represented to me that bread and water was sufficient for me, and that all else was superfluous.”

Her sufferings, meanwhile, continued to increase. She was supposed to be possessed or obsessed by the devil. Some threw holy water upon her, and made the sign of the Cross, to drive away the evil spirit. “But He by Whom I felt myself possessed,” she remarks, with simplicity, “far from fleeing away, drew me more powerfully to Himself, saying, ‘I love holy water, and I have so great an affection for the Cross, that I cannot refrain from uniting Myself closely with souls who bear it as I did, and for the love of Me.’” “These words,” she says, “enkindled so strongly in my heart the desire of suffering, that all that I endured seemed to me but as a drop of water, which rather increased than allayed my burning thirst.” The devil at the same time assaulted her with great fury. “I should have yielded a thousand times,” she says, “had I not felt an extraordinary power within me, supporting me, and combating for me.”

The Mother Superior at length ordered her to go to Holy Communion, and to beg of our Lord by obedience to restore her to her former state. “I presented myself then to Him,” she says, “as a victim of immolation. ‘Yes, My Daughter,’ He said to me, ‘I come to you as

Sovereign Sacrificer. I will give you fresh vigour, but it shall be to make you a victim to new sufferings.'"  
"I felt myself changed," she says, "on a sudden, and as a slave who has just recovered her liberty." But her trouble was soon renewed, for she was told by those about her that it was the devil who was the author of all that passed within her, and that he would destroy her by his illusions if she did not take care.

This was a terrible blow to her, for she had all her life felt a great fear of being deceived, or deceiving others. She did all she could to withdraw herself from the power of the Sovereign Spirit Who acted within her, but all her efforts were in vain. "He had taken such possession of all my powers," she says, "that I seemed as though I were in an abyss, and the more I endeavoured to escape, the deeper I was plunged in it." Our Lord calmed her fears, saying to her, "What have you to fear in the arms of the Almighty? Could He possibly allow you to perish, or abandon you to your enemies? I have been your Father, your Master, and your Director from your tenderest infancy. I have given you constant proofs of the tenderness of My Heart, and I have even given It you as your place of abode. Tell Me what stronger proof you would desire of My love, and I will give it you. But why will you combat against Me, Who am alone your true and only friend?" "These reproaches," she says, "caused me great confusion, and I resolved no longer to take any part in the trials they would make of the Spirit Who conducted me, contenting myself with accepting humbly and from my heart whatever might be required of me."

“My Lord and my God!” here exclaims Margaret Mary, “Who alone knowest the pain I suffer in writing all this, and the violence I am obliged to do myself in order to surmount the repugnance and confusion which I feel, grant me the grace to die rather than to say anything but what comes from the truth of Thy Spirit, and will give Thee glory and myself confusion. Grant for mercy’s sake, O my Sovereign Good, that this writing may never be seen by any one but the person by whom Thou wouldst have it examined, in order that it may not prevent my remaining buried in eternal contempt and oblivion on the part of creatures. Grant Thy poor slave, O my God, this consolation.” As she made this request, she heard, she tells us, the following reply: “Leave everything to My good pleasure, and allow Me to accomplish My designs without interfering with anything. I will have a care of all.”

“I will continue then, O my God, by obedience,” she replies, “without any other thought than that of pleasing Thee by this kind of martyrdom, for each word I write appears to me a sacrifice. Mayest Thou be glorified thereby eternally.” “It is true,” she adds, “that the will of God has appeared clear to me in this, for the reason I am going to mention. For having been always led to love my Sovereign Lord for the love of Himself, not wishing or desiring anything but Himself alone, I have never been attached to His gifts, however great they may have been in my regard. I valued them only because they came from Him. I thought as little as I could about them, in endeavouring to forget everything in order to remember Him alone, out of Whom all else is to me as nothing. When I was required then by

obedience to write, it seemed to me that it would be impossible to speak of things so long past. Our Lord, however, has certainly shown me by experience the contrary ; and in order to make it more easy for me, He makes me feel in the manner I mentioned regarding each particular subject of which I write. It is this that convinces me that it is His will."



## CHAPTER XVI.

1678.

WHILST Margaret Mary was thus suffering in order to satisfy the sanctity of divine justice, and that she might be more perfectly conformed to our Divine Lord in His sufferings, the time prescribed by the Institute as the limit of her worthy Mother Superior's government expired. Mother de Saumaise was to form after her departure a still closer union with Margaret Mary in devotion to the Sacred Heart, as we shall see by her letters, both from Moulins, where she was chosen Mother Superior, and from Dijon.

It may be interesting to notice here a few of the reminiscences left recorded by Mother de Saumaise of her saintly Daughter. "During the space of six years that I knew our Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque," she wrote, after the death of Margaret Mary, to her former Daughters of Paray, "I am able to say that I never remarked that she relaxed for an instant in the resolution she had taken, at the time she consecrated herself to God by her religious profession, to allow Him to reign in her above and before all, and in everything. She never allowed herself to indulge in any gratification either of mind or body. This fidelity drew down upon her from the Divine Goodness most special graces and favours, which led her to a very great desire of crosses,

humiliations, and sufferings ; so that it might be said without exaggeration that never was any one more ambitious of honour and pleasure than she was of these, though whilst she took delight in them she felt them very keenly. ‘The Cross,’ she would say, ‘is my glory ; my way to it is by love. Love reigns supreme over me ; love alone suffices me.’

“The desire which she felt to resemble our Lord Jesus Christ as closely as she could, led her to do and suffer much which was very crucifying to nature with incredible peace, patience, and gentleness. If she received any humiliation, contradiction, or mortification from any one she begged earnestly to be allowed to take disciplines and other penances for them, for she was never better pleased than when she saw herself despised.

“I will say nothing of her exactness in all the practices of religious life, and of her severe and rigorous mortifications, as others have already done so. I will only mention that when she was Mistress of the Children, one of them having an abscess in her foot, in order to overcome the repugnance which she felt at the sight of it, she put her mouth to it and sucked the corrupt matter out of it, and would have continued this mortification until the wound was healed had she not been forbidden to do so. She did many other acts of mortification no less revolting to nature, and she sought them with ardour when she knew that anything had been done by which God was offended.

“One day as she was at work, our Lord made known to her the wants of a certain soul, and asked her if she would make over to Him any good she had

done, and any sufferings she might endure, in order to obtain for this soul the grace she required. She offered herself according to His holy will, and a short time afterwards she had a severe illness, and met with a fall which caused her such pains that God alone knows how excruciating they were. She suffered for many others also in the same manner. It gave her incredible joy to be able in this way to satisfy for outrages committed against the Divine Goodness.

“Our Lord was pleased also to make her acquainted with the satisfaction He received from some persons. Thus He once showed her three who were going to Communion, and said to her, ‘I will give them three kisses of peace, love, and confidence.’ She felt inexpressible joy to see the pleasure Jesus Christ took in these holy souls.

“We have seen something of the joy which she felt in meeting with generous and faithful souls who would not falter in fulfilling the designs of God in their regard, and the holy union she formed with them, as in the case of Father de La Colombière, who on his part entertained a very high esteem for this dear Sister.”

Mother de Saumaise here mentions the incident recounted above, connected with the note of advice which Margaret Mary had written to Father de La Colombière when in London. Mother de Saumaise, it will be remembered, had omitted to send it, but afterwards, in consequence of a letter received from Father de La Colombière, had determined to do so, though with an unintentional alteration, to which Margaret Mary had called her attention. “Father de La Colombière,” she says, “on receiving this note, told me that

it had come most opportunely, and that without it he did not know what he could have done." "There are many other occasions," she adds, "which perhaps it is unnecessary to mention, in which she showed an acquaintance with circumstances which it seemed impossible to discover by human means."

"Having seen," she concludes, "all that has been written regarding this perfect Religious, I can affirm that it has been learnt either from the conversation we have had with her during the six years that I have had the honour of being in your Community, or from the letters which have been received from her since, in which she explains herself more particularly concerning the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and a Vision which she had on the Feast of the Visitation, in the year 1688.

"Persons of merit who were acquainted with our virtuous Sister Margaret Mary, entertained, and still entertain, a high esteem of her. They say that what passed within her came from the good spirit, and declare that the marks were too strong to admit of any doubt, especially her sincere humility."

Such are the sentiments which Mother de Saumaise entertained of Margaret Mary. Before we have occasion to speak of the Mother Superior who succeeded her, and who was so instrumental in manifesting the truth of the revelations communicated to Margaret Mary, it may be well to consider briefly what was the condition of the Religious Community of Paray-le-Monial at the time she took charge of it.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1677—1678.

WHAT was the religious state of the Community of Paray at the time that Margaret Mary suffered, in the manner above described, as victim of the sanctity of divine justice? This inquiry naturally suggests itself both from the very nature of the case, and also in consequence of the highly-wrought picture presented by Monsignor Languet in his *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary*.

It is no easy matter to pass judgment on a Community at the distance of nearly two centuries; but we are in possession of some historical data which may afford, perhaps, sufficient light to enable us to form a tolerably correct estimate of the state of Paray-le-Monial at this time.

We have first the testimony of the Reverend Mother Greyfié as to the state of the Community at the period of her accession as Mother Superior, in 1678, which coincides with the very period in the life of Blessed Margaret Mary we are now considering. Reared as she was at the holy source of Annecy, where she had imbibed the traditions of the sainted Founders, the Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié, could not have been unacquainted with the spirit of the Institute. The following then are the terms in which she writes, in

1690, to the Mother Lévy Châteaumorand, at that time the Mother Superior of Paray: "When I entered on the service of your House in 1678," she says, "though your Community was very good, and full of virtue and piety, nevertheless I found sentiments greatly divided regarding that true Spouse of her crucified Saviour (Sister Margaret Mary, in respect of the above-mentioned sacrifice our Lord had demanded of her)."

Again, the biographical notices written by the contemporaries of Margaret Mary present, in the lives of some of the Sisters who lived at this period, virtues of a high order. In others, and these a considerable number, we find a life undistinguished perhaps by any special brilliancy, but still closely in keeping with their holy Institute, and therefore irreproachable. As regards those of whom no notice exists, we are possessed of no grounds for forming any judgment concerning them.

The following is the account given by some of the elder Sisters, who had had opportunities of conversing with contemporaries of Blessed Margaret Mary, regarding the night of suffering passed by her before the Feast of the Presentation of our Blessed Lady. It would appear from it that it was but a small portion of the Community who took part in the scene.

The Mother de Saumaise, they say, on learning from Margaret Mary that our Lord demanded satisfaction to His justice, sent word by the Sister Assistant to the Community, who were assembled in the Choir for Matins, that in order to appease the anger of Almighty God they were to take the discipline. The greater part of the Sisters withdrew to perform this act of reparation, whilst some, suspecting that it was Margaret Mary

who had been instrumental in procuring the order to be given, repaired to the Infirmary and there gave full vent to their feelings of discontent. They led her off with them from the Infirmary, treating her as a visionary, and attributing the mysterious state to which the sanctity of divine justice had reduced her to the illusion of her imagination. They had so far, however, returned to a better sense by the following morning, as to be able to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of our Lady by receiving Holy Communion and by the renewal of their vows.

The overdrawn picture, as it would seem to be, which is presented by Monsignor Languet may be accounted for to some extent by what is stated by some of the Sisters, contemporaries of Blessed Margaret Mary, as we have it on the authority of some of the elder Sisters, who received it from them.

Monsignor Languet, not at that time Bishop, was appointed Superior of the Monastery of Paray-le-Monial in 1712, and consequently several of the Sisters who had been contemporaries of Blessed Margaret Mary would have been still alive at the time that he made his canonical visitations of the monastery. They declared, as we have it on the authority of some of the elder Sisters, that, in speaking with him, under a feeling of deep grief at having failed to appreciate at once the sanctity of Blessed Margaret Mary, they accused themselves so unmercifully and in such exaggerated terms that the good Superior might easily have been led to form conclusions unfavourable to the whole Community, as it would seem from the tone of his work he has actually done.

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We meet again incidentally with a further testimony from the Rev. Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié, in a circular from the Nuns of Paray, dated July 9, 1729, and addressed to the other Houses of the Visitation.

“The most interesting news we can send you,” say the Sisters, “is the re-election of our most honoured Mother Mary Helena Coing. Her spiritual gifts, her prudence, and her unvarying temper, joined to her rare talents, make her an accomplished Mother Superior, a Mother according to the Heart of God, and most acceptable to us. You may judge, then, very dear Sisters, whether we hesitated to put ourselves again under her judicious and amiable guidance, having experienced such kindness under her first government.

“We would gladly do what we can to lighten her burden, and perpetuate amongst us what was agreeably remarked by our most honoured Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié, that Paray was the Thabor of Superiors, owing to the submission and exact regularity she found in the monastery, which she compared to that of the first Monastery of Annecy, of which she was Professed; adding that she had never seen or governed one which was more conformable to it.”

Finally, a deposition made on occasion of the Process instituted in 1715, supplies us with the following testimony. M. Michon, an inhabitant of Paray, a parliamentary lawyer, deposes “that he has a brother living who has acted for more than twenty-four years as Confessor to the Community of Paray (during the lifetime of Blessed Margaret Mary); that his said brother, the Priest, told him that this was one of the most regular monasteries in the kingdom, and that, amongst



others, there was a Sister who lived like a Saint, meaning the Venerable Sister Alacoque."

The picture presented by these various testimonies sets before us the Religious Community of Paray as very good, remarkable for its regularity, and distinguished by striking virtues.

In spite, however, of this regularity which existed in the Community, there is no doubt that there prevailed for some time a diversity of opinion regarding the mysterious favours bestowed upon Blessed Margaret Mary. It could hardly, indeed, have been otherwise. It was necessary that these extraordinary graces should be tested before their divine character could be generally recognised; and whilst there was as yet an exterior uncertainty regarding them, they could hardly fail to meet with contradiction. And though it is true that the marvellous graces bestowed upon Margaret Mary had an intimate connection with the very soul of her Institute, it is no great reflection upon a Community that they should have failed to detect at once this mysterious and intimate union, especially when their attention was fixed so jealously upon the faithful observance of the letter of the Rule, and when the extraordinary character of the graces seemed at first sight at variance with the acknowledged simplicity of the Institute.

As regards the Mothers Superior who governed the Monastery during the time of Margaret Mary, we find that they studied her conduct and virtues carefully, tried her as prudence required they should do, and eventually were severally satisfied of the divine character of her mission.

As regards the Community, the great majority

entertained a sincere regard for Blessed Margaret Mary, and admired her virtues, even though they hesitated to accept the Devotion she desired so earnestly to establish.

There were, indeed, some among the Sisters who showed themselves less fervent and less charitable. They were severe in their criticisms upon the particular Devotions Margaret Mary sought to introduce, and regarded as illusions the mysterious favours which she received. They advocated the observance of the Rule, but it was at the expense sometimes of humility, meekness, and charity. What was the proportion which these Sisters bore to the rest of the Community?

We may perhaps receive some light on this point from the revelations made to Margaret Mary.

These revelations indeed have commonly something of a mystical character. They appear sometimes to regard the Faithful in general, sometimes to refer to Religious exclusively; often they seem to regard the Visitation alone, and sometimes to refer exclusively to the Community of Paray. Of this last kind appears to be one which we have already spoken of, in which our Blessed Lady made known a desire she had felt of forming for herself a crown, to be composed of all the Sisters of the Community. She desired to present herself, thus adorned, on the Feast of her Assumption before the Blessed Trinity. But as she quitted the earth there remained but fifteen to form her crown; of these five were chosen as Spouses of her Son. The rest were held back by the ties which attached them to the earth. Five of the latter number were shown on another occasion to Margaret Mary as "those which this loving Heart was ready to reject." Margaret Mary

intercedes for them. "I will not quit Thee," she says, "until Thou hast granted me the conversion of those hearts." "Charge yourself with this burden," is the answer she receives, "and share in the bitterness of My Heart." She entreated earnestly that they might be filled with His divine love; "but I had to suffer much," she says, "before this was accomplished." We have seen what some of those sufferings were in what occurred on the eve of the Presentation.

The comparatively few sisters (perhaps the five thus indicated) who took part in the scene, evidently understood nothing of the real nature of the mysterious sufferings of Margaret Mary. Some suggested remedies; others had recourse to holy water. Their blindness, from whatever cause it proceeded, appeared to be instrumental, in the hands of Almighty God, to the increase of the sufferings of His self-devoted victim.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that it was of these that our Lord complained to Blessed Margaret Mary under the figure of the five hearts whom He was on the point of rejecting, and for whom He would have her make herself responsible.

Finally, on the following morning, the Feast of the Presentation, she is assured by our Lord after Holy Communion: "Peace is made, and My sanctity of justice is satisfied." And thus the five hearts on the point of being rejected appear to have been restored to His favour.

The testimonies, then, to which we have referred would seem to favour the conclusion that during the lifetime of Blessed Margaret Mary the Community of Paray was in general very good, that its regularity

was even remarkable, and that great virtues were practised in it. Such is the opinion to which we seem to be led by the authority of the Rev. Mother Greyfié, the expressions of contemporaries, and the depositions adduced in the Process in 1715.

Several of the Sisters, as we have seen, show themselves true Daughters of St. Francis of Sales, and are admitted by our Lord to the number of His Spouses. Many, though falling short of this perfection, are good Religious, and are thought worthy of "forming a crown" for the Blessed Virgin. Some call forth the complaints and threats of our Lord; but Margaret Mary offers herself as victim for them, and she is assured that the sanctity of His justice is satisfied.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1678—1679.

THE second three years of Mother de Saumaise's Superiority having expired, the Community of Paray turned to Annecy for her successor, and obtained from them the object of their choice, Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié. Whilst yet an infant, Péronne Rosalie Greyfié had had the happiness of receiving the blessing of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. She had been trained as a child at Annecy, under the Venerable Mothers de Chaugy and de Blonay, names so well known in the annals of the Visitation; she was there admitted to the holy Habit at the early age of fifteen, and made her Noviceship under Mother Mary Margaret Michel, who had been formed under the immediate care of the sainted Founder himself. In 1670 she was chosen Mother Superior of Thonon, and after returning at the end of six years to Annecy, where she was appointed Mistress of Novices, she was now destined, in 1678, to take charge of the Community of Paray.

The terms in which the Rev. Mother Philiberte Emmanuel de Monthoux acceded to the request of the Community, may furnish us with some idea of the worth of their new Mother Superior. "My dear Sisters," she wrote, "it is a real and heartfelt sacrifice which I make in giving you, at your request, my honoured Sister,

the Mother deposed of Thonon, at present our worthy Mistress of Novices. She is a valuable subject, and possesses perfectly the spirit of firmness and mildness required for government. She is of a straightforward and sincere character, perfectly humble, and very exact in regular observance. In short, my dear Sisters, had I not as great a regard as I have for the Monastery of Paray, I could not consent to part with a Mother, with whom I am sure you will be greatly pleased." Father de La Colombière, on meeting her in 1679, discovered at once her singular talent for government, and told the Community they possessed in her a most able Mother Superior, and one specially favoured with the precious gift of the discernment of spirits.

Possessed of warmth of heart and sound judgment, Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié, as she is described by her Sisters of Paray-le-Monial, joined to a high order of mind, refinement, and strength of character. She was disposed to entertain great distrust of all that was extraordinary, and was strongly attached to the peculiar spirit of the Visitation, which is one of simplicity. Hence she appears to have been specially chosen to place beyond a doubt the divine character of the mysterious and extraordinary graces bestowed upon Margaret Mary.

We possess a valuable memoir written by her, which she sent in 1690, after the death of Margaret Mary, to the Mother Lévy Châteaumorand, at that time Mother Superior of the Monastery of Paray. From this we learn what were the sentiments she entertained regarding Blessed Margaret Mary, and the course which she adopted in her conduct towards her.

Finding, on her first arrival at Paray, that there existed in the Community a diversity of opinion regarding Blessed Margaret Mary, and being naturally a lover of peace, she determined, she tells us, on taking no more notice than she was obliged of the extraordinary favours communicated to her. "I trusted in this a great deal," she says, "to the assurances she made me herself that our Lord would lead me to act according to His holy will in her regard." If anything was done by Margaret Mary which caused annoyance to others, the Mother Greyfié, acting in this spirit, would allow them to express their disapprobation of it, even though the thing had been done by her own order, or with her permission, and she would even blame her herself if the disapprobation happened to be expressed in her presence.

Whilst the prudent Mother Superior thus tested the virtue of her favoured Daughter, our Divine Lord, on His part, instructed the Mother Greyfié herself by a sensible admonition concerning the reality of the mysterious graces He had communicated to her.

Margaret Mary was in the habit, as we have seen, of making an hour's prayer, enjoined her by our Lord Himself, and since known by the name of the "Holy Hour," on the night between Thursday and Friday. She had obtained permission for this from the Rev. Mother de Saumaise, on the occasion of her miraculous restoration to health by the hands of the Blessed Virgin, above mentioned. She spent this hour prostrate upon the ground, her arms stretched out in the form of a cross. The Mother Greyfié required her to change this position when suffering more than usual in health, and

to take the position of kneeling, her hands joined or her arms crossed upon her breast. She proceeded indeed so far as to forbid her the hour's prayer altogether. Margaret Mary obeyed the orders given her. "But often during the time," says the Mother Greyfié, "she came to me full of apprehension, telling me that it seemed to her that our Lord was angry with me for the forbiddance, and that she was afraid He would exact satisfaction for it in a manner that I should be very sorry for and feel deeply." The Mother Greyfié still remained inflexible, till the sudden death, on the 14th of October, 1678, at the early age of twenty-one, of Sister Mary Elizabeth Carré, on whom she had built her greatest hopes, made her think more seriously on the matter. "I lost no time," is her own account, "in restoring the hour of prayer to your precious departed (Sister Margaret Mary), for I was strongly possessed by the thought that this was the punishment with which she had threatened me on the part of our Lord."

It was, perhaps, in consequence of the assurance she had thus received from our Lord Himself of the truth of His communications to Margaret Mary, that the Mother Greyfié consented without hesitation to take part in the execution of a spiritual document which Margaret Mary was required by Him about this time to draw up. Margaret Mary had already, as we have seen, in compliance with His demand, made an entire surrender of herself, by the sacrifice of her whole being to His Sacred Heart in favour of charity. He now required her to do the same in writing. She was ordered by our Lord to ask her Mother Superior to draw up this mysterious will. He promised to bestow



upon her a solid recompense in return. In case of her refusal, Margaret Mary was to address herself to Father de La Colombière, whose return from England was brought about by an unexpected course of events, and who visited Paray early in the following year, 1679. The Mother Greyfié, however, consented to draw up the deed herself. The following are the terms of this mystical document :—

“May Jesus ever live in the heart of His Spouse, Sister Margaret Mary, for whom, in virtue of the power which God gives me over her, I offer, dedicate, and consecrate, purely and inviolably to the Sacred Heart of the Adorable Jesus, all the good which she may do during her life, and whatever may be done for her after her death, in order that the will of this Divine Heart may dispose of it at His good pleasure, and in favour of whomsoever He may please, whether living or dead,—Sister Margaret Mary protesting that she voluntarily strips herself in general of all excepting the will to be for ever united to the Divine Heart of her Jesus, and to love Him purely for the love of Himself. In testimony whereof she and I sign this writing, the last day of December, 1678.

“Sister Péronne-Rosalie Greyfié, Mother Superior, for whose conversion, together with the grace of final penitence, Sister Margaret Mary will pray to the Divine and Adorable Heart.”

Margaret Mary then presented this mysterious will, thus executed, to our Divine Lord. He promised to make over to her, in return for the surrender which she had made of herself, the riches of His Sacred Heart. “I presented it,” she says, “to the only Love

of my soul. He testified His great pleasure at receiving it, and told me that He would dispose of it according to His designs, and in favour of whomsoever He pleased. But, since the love of Him had stripped me of all, He would have me possess no other riches than those of His Sacred Heart."

In signing this donation of herself, Margaret Mary would imitate her sainted Foundress, and engraved the holy name of Jesus with a penknife upon her heart. Our Lord then gave her a donation of the treasures of His Sacred Heart. This, she tells us, she wrote as follows, at His dictation, in her own blood :—

"I make you heiress of My Heart and of all Its treasures for time and eternity, allowing you to use them according to your desire, and I promise you that you shall only fail to receive assistance when My Heart shall want power to give it you. You shall be for ever Its beloved Disciple, the sport of Its good pleasure, and the victim of Its wishes. It shall be the sole delight of all your desires; It will repair and supply for your defects, and discharge your obligations for you."

Our Lord afterwards told her that He would recompense a hundredfold all the good that should be done her as if done to Himself, and that He would bestow upon the person who had drawn up the will the same recompense He had bestowed upon St. Clare of Montefalcone; and that He would, to that end, add to her actions the infinite merits of His own, and enable her, by the love of His Sacred Heart, to merit the same crown. The joy which Margaret Mary felt at hearing

this shows how true a love she entertained for our Lord, for the treatment she received from her Mother Superior had nothing to recommend it on the ground of human nature. "This gave me great consolation," she observes, "for I loved her greatly, because she fed my soul with the delightful bread of mortification and humiliation." "God has done me this favour," she adds, "that I have never been without it." Her whole life, indeed, was passed in sufferings both of body and soul, nor would our Lord allow her to find any consolation but in Himself. "I have always regarded this," she says, "as one of the greatest favours which my God has done me, that He has never deprived me of the precious treasure of the Cross, in spite of the bad use I have made of it." The very thought of it leads her to burst forth into praises of it. "I could have wished," she says, "to melt with love and gratitude towards my Liberator." "It gives me such pleasure," she concludes, "to speak of the happiness of suffering, that it seems to me I could write whole volumes about it without thinking I had said enough."

In spite of the assurances which our Lord gave her Himself of the truth of His communications to her, the low opinion which she entertained of herself made Margaret Mary constantly fearful lest she might be deceived, and lest the favours she received were illusions of the devil. On receiving the slightest confirmation in these sentiments, she was ready to give credence to it, thinking that she was worthy of nothing else but to be the sport of the evil spirit. "These apprehensions on her part," writes the Mother Greyfié, "inspired me with the same." But she was reassured by a conversation she

had with the Rev. Father de La Colombière,\* to whom she spoke on the subject. He told her that he had no hesitation in believing that what took place with regard to Margaret Mary was truly a grace from God. "But what matters it," he said to her, "even though it were an illusion of the devil, provided it produce in her the same effect as would be produced by the grace of our Lord?" "But there is no appearance," he added, "of the devil having any part in it, for in that case, in wishing to deceive her, he would be deceiving himself; for humility, simplicity, and exact obedience, and mortification, are not the fruits of the spirit of darkness." "Upon this advice," says the Mother Greyfié, "I felt greatly reassured, because, whatever course I took, I always found Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque faithful in the practice of those virtues, and in the exact observance of her holy duties."

Father de La Colombière, writing shortly after this from Lyons, bears similar testimony to the virtues he had witnessed himself in Margaret Mary. "As I passed through Paray," he writes on the 23rd of March, 1679, to Mother de Saumaise, "I was able to see Sister Alacoque but once, but I derived great consolation from the visit. I found her, as usual, extremely humble and submissive, with a great love of the Cross and of humiliation. These are the marks of the good spirit by which she is led; they are such as have never deceived any one."

\* This was on occasion of a passing visit he paid to Paray on his way to Lyons, after his return from England in 1679.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1679.

THE visit of Father de La Colombière to Paray was most seasonable for Margaret Mary, for she was suffering greatly at the time from those temptations on the part of the devil, of which she had been forewarned by our Lord. At one time he tempted her to despair. He represented to her that it was useless for her to entertain any hope of Heaven, void as she was of all love of God, and that she would be deprived of Him for all eternity. "This made me," she says, "shed floods of tears." At other times he attacked her with vainglory, and also, as she expresses it, with "that abominable temptation of gluttony." "He made me feel," she says, "a ravenous hunger. He presented to my imagination whatever was most calculated to gratify the taste, and this during the time of my spiritual exercises. This was a terrible torture to me." This hunger continued until she entered the Refectory; the moment she entered it she felt at once so great a disgust for food that she was obliged to use great violence with herself to take any. On leaving the Refectory her hunger returned more violently than before. "My Mother Superior," she says, "from whom I concealed nothing that passed within me, ordered me to come and ask for something to eat whenever

I felt a violent attack of hunger. I did so with extreme repugnance, in consequence of the great confusion I felt in so doing. But instead of sending me to take something to eat she mortified and humbled me greatly, telling me to reserve my hunger, and that I might satisfy it when the rest of the Community went to the Refectory." "Upon this," she says, "I remained at peace in my suffering."

Margaret Mary's principal source of affliction in these temptations was the fear she had of offending God. In her distress, besides the strength she obtained before the Blessed Sacrament, she found great relief in opening her heart to her Mother Superior. The instructions she received on these occasions from the Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié give us an insight into the interior trials with which our Lord visited her. Many of these instructions have been preserved to us from the fact that the Mother Greyfié being often occupied at the time that Margaret Mary wished to speak to her, she was required by her Mother Superior to put her difficulties in writing and received a reply to them also in writing.

"I beg of Jesus Christ, our Almighty Lord and Saviour," writes the Mother Greyfié on one occasion, "to command the tempest within you to cease, and I say to you in His name: Be at peace. Your soul is the portion of our Lord, and He is the portion of your soul. You will love Him in spite of your enemies in eternity, by the eternal enjoyment of Him—and in time, by suffering for the love of Him whensoever He may permit it. Eat what you wish with the rest of the Community at the ordinary time of meals ;

at other times endure your hunger patiently. Humble yourself before God at the thought of your temptations. Hope firmly in His grace and assistance, and let your enemy clamour as much as he pleases. Remain in peace. Blessed be God."

"All that I can say to you, my dear child," she writes on another occasion, "respecting the state of mind of which you have spoken to me as the cause of your suffering, is that you complain, as I may say, of being too well off. I should esteem it a great grace if God allowed me to suffer as you do. It is, as I have already told you, to think but ill of the Divine Goodness to allow yourself the thought that He will permit a soul to be deprived for ever of His love which desires to love Him both in time and eternity. He has never done so, and will never do it. If, whilst He favours you with an extraordinary sense of His divine attributes, He allows you at the same time to see something of your unworthiness, and of that abyss of evil which your sins deserve, you are not to abuse this knowledge. It is given you in order that you may know the greatness of our Lord's divine mercy, Who sets His merits against your demerits. You should therefore constantly repeat: 'I will sing for ever the mercies of our Lord, for His goodness endureth for ever.' Something, however, is due from us during this life to His justice; we must practise patience, humility, and submission, under any pains or sufferings which He may send us. Bear your sufferings in this spirit. Esteem and cherish them; for great Saints have endured them. Receive them then with thankfulness, peace, meekness, and humility.

It would be a very happy thing for you, did they in a manner so annihilate you that you might lose all thought of yourself. Blessed be God."

Our Blessed Lord provided Margaret Mary with a special means of consolation in her sufferings by assigning her a chosen Guardian Angel, who was to accompany her everywhere, and assist her wherever she required his help against her enemy. "This favour," she says, "gave me such strength that it seemed to me I had no longer anything to fear, for this faithful guardian of my soul assisted me with such love that he freed me from all my pains." She was allowed to see him only when our Lord withdrew His sensible presence from her in order to plunge her in the rigorous pains of His sanctity of justice. It was then especially that this Angel consoled her and conversed familiarly with her.

He told her one day who he was. "I am one," he said, "of those who stand nearest the throne of the Divine Majesty, and participate most fully in the ardours of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ." "My design," he added, "is to communicate them to you as far as you are able to receive them."

He gave her many counsels and admonitions. When our Lord manifested His divine presence she no longer saw him. He prostrated himself, he said, at this time to render homage to the infinite greatness of God thus humbled to her littleness. "I found him always ready," she remarks, "to assist me in my necessities. He never refused me anything I asked of him."

In the Retreat also which Margaret Mary had made



this year, our Lord had strengthened her beforehand to bear these sufferings which He told her would be coming upon her. "As I was complaining," she says in the notes which she has left of this Retreat, "that He gave me consolations in too great abundance, for I did not feel capable of bearing them, He told me that it was to strengthen me in what I had to undergo. 'Eat and drink at the table of My delights,' He said to me, 'to refresh yourself, in order that you may advance courageously, for you will have a long and rugged way to go, and you will often have need to take breath and rest in My Heart, which shall always be open to you.'"

He told her she was to appease His anger against sinners, and move His mercy to pardon them; and that she was not to make any resistance to the arrangements He should make for her by obedience; "For I wish you," He said, "to serve Me as an instrument to draw hearts to My love." "Never forget your nothingness," He added, "and that you are the victim of My Heart, and should be always disposed to be sacrificed for charity. But, as I have promised you, you shall possess in exchange the treasures of My Heart, and I permit you to dispose of them at will in favour of such as are well disposed. Do not be sparing with them, for they are infinite." He told her she could not please Him better than by a constant fidelity to her Rule. "The Religious," He said, "deceives himself and separates himself from Me, who thinks to find Me by any other way than that of an exact observance of his Rules."

She was to abandon herself wholly to Him without

any thought or care of herself. He would reward or punish all that should be done to her. He promised to think of those who should have confidence in her prayers, in order that she might occupy herself wholly with His love.

“I have a rough and heavy cross,” He said, “to put upon your weak shoulders, but I am powerful enough to support it. I will not permit Satan to tempt you with any but the three kinds of temptations with which he had the boldness to attack Me. But fear nothing, trust in Me; I am your protector and guarantee. I have established My reign of peace in your soul, so that no one shall be able to trouble it, and that of My love in your heart. It will give you a joy that no one will be able to take from you.”

## CHAPTER XX.

1678—1681.

IT may be interesting to notice briefly some of the records which Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié has left in her memoir of her personal recollections of Blessed Margaret Mary, especially in connection with the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

“You know, my honoured Sister,” she writes to the Mother Lévy Châteaumorand, in 1690, “that the adorable Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ was the object of her great and heartfelt devotion from the time that our Lord first conferred upon her the grace of discovering to her His Heart in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, as may be seen in the book of Retreats of the Rev. Father de La Colombière.\* Although he does not speak of her by name, we know very well that it was from her that he learnt what he there mentions, and the knowledge thus obtained of her cost her no little on the score of humility.

“I remember that the first time I had the happiness of conversing with this dear Sister, she appeared to me to have a strong and ardent desire to discover

\* This book, which contains a record by Father de La Colombière of the graces he received during his spiritual Retreats, was published after his death, and was mainly instrumental in making the Devotion to the Sacred Heart more generally known.

some means of making this adorable Heart known, loved, and adored, if possible, by the whole world. She was held back, on the other hand, by the low opinion she entertained of herself, and which increased every day. She believed sincerely that it was enough for her to take part in the work to spoil all, and to give a distaste for the Devotion which she had so much at heart, and for the establishment of which she would willingly have given a thousand lives."

It will be remembered that in 1674, on the occasion of our Divine Lord first discovering to Margaret Mary the ineffable secrets of His Sacred Heart, and communicating to her some sparks of Its divine fire, the reality of this mysterious Vision was attested by a pain in her side which was to last, as our Lord assured her, as long as she lived. She was to find relief from it only by bleeding, and this also was to prove to her a source of humiliation.

Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié refers as follows to the circumstance, and records at the same time the verification of the prophecy:—

"God had sent her," she writes, "a pain in the side, which she endured in honour of the Sacred Wound of our Lord. He told her one day, that she should find no relief in any remedy except bleeding; and in order that she might make no difficulty in partaking of this relief, He promised to make it meritorious to her provided that in receiving it she would call to mind the Blood and Water which came forth upon the Cross from the Wound of His Sacred Side. I have seen her bear this pain in silence, without asking to be bled, for both our Sisters and myself

felt a repugnance to it, as it was necessary to have recourse to it so often. It was objected to as being a remedy rather suggested by her fancy than suited to her ailment. She had frequent opportunities, in consequence, of suffering in silence and in secret, between God and herself. I resolved on one occasion not to allow her to be bled. Several other remedies were applied, but they served only to increase the pain. She was at last in such a condition that she vomited everything that she took. She refused nothing that was given her for two or three days, and never complained of the wretched state to which she was reduced in consequence of not being allowed to be bled. When I spoke of it to her, 'I know, my Mother,' she said to me, 'that this is the only remedy that can relieve me, but I do not desire it unless your charity wishes it, for my Jesus makes you wish all that He wishes for me. I am glad to suffer as long as He pleases.'

"The malady having at last reduced her to such a condition that she could hardly breathe or speak, and the vomitings having brought her to a state of great weakness, I had her taken to the Infirmary, and no sooner was a little blood taken from her than she began to breathe freely, recovered her power of speech, and felt such vigour, that, as soon as her arm was bound up, she asked me to allow her to join the regular exercises of the Community.

"From a desire to spare her the little ordinary mortifications which this remedy brought upon her, I sent Sister Catherine Augustine Marest occasionally to bleed her in her cell. But our Lord, Who did not

wish that she should have this alleviation, permitted that one day when I had used this precaution she fainted during the Holy Mass, and every one guessed at once what was the cause."

In order to gratify her desire of suffering like Him, our Lord sent Margaret Mary, at this time, so burning a thirst that she could not quench it, whatever quantity of water she took. To mortify herself, however, still more, she would drink nothing from the Thursday evening till the following Saturday.\* "She continued this practice so long," says the Mother Greyfié, "that I thought myself obliged to forbid it her, and I gave her an obedience to drink three or four times between meals every day." "And this," she remarks, "she observed exactly." In her desire, however, still to join mortification with obedience, she would drink the water in which the dishes had been washed. She received, however, a severe rebuke from the Mother Superior, who reminded her of the words of their holy Founder, that "true obedience obeys not only the command, but also the intention of the Superior."

It would seem that this great desire of mortifying her thirst is to be referred to the following incident, mentioned by Margaret Mary herself in the narrative of her life. "One time," she says, "my Sovereign gave me to understand that He wished to withdraw me into solitude, not into that of the desert whither He Himself had retired, but into that of His Sacred

\* This was observed by some of the Sisters, who noticed at the end of the meals that the cups of wine and water set before her remained untouched.

Heart." Here, He said, He would allow her to enjoy most familiar converse with Him, and give her fresh instructions regarding His will, and new strength to accomplish it. "He asked me," she says, "in order to honour His fast in the desert, to fast for fifty days on bread and water. But obedience not having given me permission for this, in order that I might not be singular, He told me that it would be equally pleasing to Him if I passed fifty days without drinking, in order to honour the burning thirst which He had suffered on the tree of the Cross, and that which His Sacred Heart had continually endured for the salvation of sinners. I was allowed to practise this penance, which seemed to me more severe than the other, in consequence of the thirst with which I was continually tormented, and which made it necessary for me to drink frequently large glasses of water in order to relieve it."

Margaret Mary had engraved, as we have seen, at the beginning of the year 1679, as the signature of that mystical will by which she had made over to our Lord all her spiritual goods, His holy name upon her heart. The characters becoming effaced a little before the time of her annual Retreat, the ingenuity of her love suggested to her to renew the impression by the aid of a lighted taper. She succeeded even beyond her expectations, so that, on the eve of entering her Retreat, she felt herself obliged to acquaint the Mother Superior with the serious nature of the wounds she had inflicted on herself. The Mother Greyfié told her that she would have some remedy applied, for fear of their being attended with dangerous consequences.

Margaret Mary, alarmed at this announcement, made her complaints to our Lord, and begged of Him to cure her Himself and to save her from the confusion.

"Our Lord was touched," she says, "at the pain I felt at the thought of this being known, and promised me that on the morrow I should be healed." She was so in fact; but before she had been able to mention it to the Mother Superior, the Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures was sent to her, bearing a note, in which it was stated that it was to her that the Mother Superior wished her to show her wounds. Margaret Mary thought she might be dispensed from this obedience until she could speak with the Mother Superior, which she lost no time in doing. The Mother Greyfié reproved her for her disobedience, and deprived her of Holy Communion; "which was for me," she remarks, "the severest pain that I could suffer in this life." She ordered her, also, to show the Sister the injury she had inflicted on herself. The Sister found the wounds healed, though the scars were still to be seen tracing the holy name of JESUS in large characters, as the Sister describes it, such as are stamped with moulds on large books\*. "But nothing could be compared," says Margaret Mary, "to the grief I felt at having displeased my Sovereign Master." Our Lord punished her severely for this reluctance in point of obedience, and kept her, as she describes it, under His sacred feet for about five days. "At length," she says, "after having made me feel this pain, He dried

\* Deposition of Sister Péronne Rosalie de Farges at the Process of 1715. She had learnt these particulars from Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures.



up my tears Himself, and restored life to my soul during the last days of my Retreat." Our Lord told her, however, that, in punishment of her fault, the traces of His holy name, which she had recently made at so dear a cost, should be effaced, and that the first marks also—which had up to that time been clearly visible—should also disappear.\* "In fine," she remarks, "I may say that I made a Retreat of sorrow."

Margaret Mary met at this time with a serious accident, the details of which are given as follows by the Mother Greyfié, in her memoir:—

"I remember," she writes, "that one day, as she was engaged in drawing water, the bucket she had just filled slipped from her hands, and, as it fell back into the well, the iron handle of the windlass struck her with such force in the face that it broke away, together with the teeth, a portion of the gums, about the size and thickness of half a finger. The only notice she took of it was to ask one of the children, whose Mistress she then was, to cut off the piece of flesh, which still adhered by one end. The children, however, terrified at seeing her in such a condition, would not touch it. She accordingly cut it off, as well as she could herself, with the help of her scissors. But the wound in her mouth gave her great pain as often as she was obliged to take any nourishment. Besides, the blow caused her a pain in the temples—

\* After the death of Blessed Margaret Mary, some of the Sisters, and among them Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures, were desirous of seeing whether the holy name of JESUS was still visible upon her heart, but not a trace of it was to be seen.

which after any meal became almost unbearable—like a very violent toothache. The only relief she applied was to quit recreation, with permission, and take a few turns in the garden until the pain subsided, and then she would again join the rest. She suffered all these pains without a complaint, and without even asking for relief, always following the ordinary exercises of the Community, unless obliged by her ailments to do otherwise. Nor even then did she ask ; it was necessary to think of it for her.”

Amidst the graces with which our Lord favoured Margaret Mary, she was constantly tormented with the apprehension lest she might be the victim of some illusion. In order, therefore, to calm this apprehension, our Lord gave her, she tells us, some marks by which she might be assured that these graces truly came from Him.

“He taught me first,” she says, “that His special graces would always be accompanied by some humiliations, contradictions, or contempt on the part of creatures ; secondly, that after having received any of these divine communications, of which my soul is so unworthy, I should feel plunged in an abyss of self-annihilation and interior confusion, which would make me feel as much sorrow at the sight of my unworthiness as I should have experienced consolation at the liberality of my Divine Saviour, thus checking all vain satisfaction and every feeling of self-esteem. That the graces and communications which I received, whether for myself or others, would never produce the least sentiment of contempt for any one whatever, and that, whatever knowledge they gave me of the

Heart." Here, He said, He would allow me most familiar converse with Him, and His instructions regarding His will, and to accomplish it. "He asked me," she said, "to honour His fast in the desert, ten days on bread and water. But obedience given me permission for this, in order not to be singular, He told me that it was pleasing to Him if I passed fifty days fasting, in order to honour the burning which He had suffered on the tree of the Cross. His Sacred Heart had continually effected the salvation of sinners. I was allowed a fast of penance, which seemed to me more agreeable than other, in consequence of the thirst which I was continually tormented, and which made me to drink frequently large glasses of water to relieve it."

Margaret Mary had engraved, as she said, at the beginning of the year 1679, a mark of that mystical will by which she had offered to our Lord all her spiritual goods, upon her heart. The characters becoming more distinct before the time of her annual Retreat, of her own accord she began to renew by the use of the sacred taper. She said that, in consequence of that, on the evening of the 15th, she felt obliged to confess the serious nature of her illness. The Mother Superior, seeing some remedy applicable, resorted to it with dangerous consequences.

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But as she left the Infirmary by one door, it so happened that the Mother Greyfié entered by the other, and was greatly surprised to see Margaret Mary already up and to hear that she was fasting in order to receive Holy Communion. "Without waiting to hear any explanation," says the Mother Greyfié, "I gave her a smart rebuke, exaggerating the fault of her conduct, which I said was the effect of self-will and want of obedience, submission, and simplicity." In conclusion, she told her that she might go to Mass, and communicate, but that, since her self-will had given her sufficient strength for this, she should follow in every point the exercises of the Community for five months, without making use of any remedy during that time, or setting foot in the Infirmary, except to visit and serve the sick whenever the Infirmary required her help. "She received my correction," says the Mother Greyfié, "on her knees, her hands joined, and with a calm and peaceful countenance."

She immediately began to carry out to the letter the orders she had received, and she continued quite well from that time to the Feast of the Presentation of our Lady, which exactly completed the five months. On that day, after the renewal of her vows, all her former maladies returned. "And, in order that she might lose nothing," says the Mother Greyfié, "by the five months during which she had been free from them, our Lord was pleased that they should be increased twofold, so that the pain in her side, which before obliged her to be bled every fortnight or three weeks, now hardly gave her a week's respite."

Besides the pains which her bodily infirmities and

frequent illnesses brought upon her, Margaret Mary had often to endure great anguish of mind as victim to the sanctity of justice for the salvation of others. When our Lord would have her suffer for any soul whom He was on the point of abandoning, He would make her feel all the desolation felt by a reprobate soul at the hour of death. "I never experienced anything more terrible," she says; "I have no words to explain it."

On such an occasion she would offer herself to the justice of God to suffer whatever He pleased, that so He would not abandon this soul. "It seemed to me then," she says, "that His just anger turned against me, and I felt a frightful anguish, surrounded, as I seemed to be on every side, by desolating objects." She felt weighed down by an overwhelming weight. She beheld an angry God, armed with fury to punish her. Hell seemed open to swallow her up. All was in confusion within her. She was assailed on every side by violent temptations, especially to despair. There is no kind of torture, she says, which she would not have endured to be delivered from her persecutor. She could only exclaim: "How dreadful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!" At other times, prostrating herself on the ground, she would say: "Strike, O my God! burn, consume all that displeases Thee. Spare not my body, my life, my flesh, my blood, provided Thou save eternally this soul." "I confess," she says, "that I could not have long endured such a condition, had not the divine mercy supported me under the rigour of His justice."

She fell ill in consequence, and it was with dif-

ficulty that she recovered. "Our Lord often," she says, "made me endure this state." It was from the Sacred Heart of our Lord Itself that she drew the means of satisfying His justice. "I will not leave Thee," were her words to our Lord when interceding with Him in behalf of some souls whom He was resolved on visiting with His chastisement, "until Thou hast pardoned them." "I will do so," He said, "if you will answer for them." "Yes, my God," she replied, "but I will pay Thee with Thy own gifts, which are the treasures of Thy Sacred Heart." "And with this," she says, "He was satisfied."

The period of the annual Retreat for the year 1681 having arrived, Margaret Mary was confined to her bed with fever. The Mother Greyfié, however, trusting to the power of obedience over her, ordered her to leave the Infirmary and to take her place with the rest. "I consign you, my Sister," she said, "to the care of our Lord Jesus Christ. May He direct, govern, and cure you according to His will." "Though the order surprised me a little," remarks Margaret Mary, "for I was at the time shivering with fever, I went my way nevertheless, full of joy at such an obedience, both on account of the pleasure I felt at seeing myself given over to the care of my good Master, and at having an opportunity of suffering for His love." It was indifferent to her in what manner He was pleased that she should make her Retreat, whether in suffering or joy. "All alike is good to me," she said, "provided He is satisfied ; provided I love Him, that is enough for me."

"I was no sooner in retirement," is her account,

‘than He presented Himself to me. I was lying upon the ground, pierced with cold, and overwhelmed with pain. He raised me and loaded me with caresses, saying to me: ‘Now you are wholly Mine, and entirely under My care. I will, therefore, give you back in health to those who placed you sick in My hands.’” Our Lord restored her, in fact, at once to such perfect health, that it seemed as if she had never been ill. All were struck with astonishment to see her, especially the Mother Superior who knew all that had taken place. “I had never spent a Retreat,” says Margaret Mary, “with such joy and delight. I seemed to be in Heaven, so great were the constant favours, caresses, and familiarity which I enjoyed, both on the part of my Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, His most Blessed Mother, my Guardian Angel, and my blessed Father, St. Francis of Sales.”

What these graces were she does not tell us. Not the least among them would have been the following, of which she makes mention. Our Lord, she tells us, to console her for the affliction He had caused her by effacing His adorable name, which she had engraved and burnt upon her heart, traced it Himself interiorly in her heart, as she describes it, with the burning pencil of His pure love. “This He did,” she says, “in a manner which caused me more joy and consolation than the other had caused me grief and affliction.”

But in the midst even of these heavenly favours which our Lord lavished upon her, Margaret Mary could not be happy without satisfying her desire to imitate Him in His suffering life. She therefore resolved on exercising on herself all the rigour which



the liberty in which she was left gave her the opportunity of practising. "And indeed," she says, "I did so to a considerable extent both by penances and in respect of food and sleep." She strewed her bed with broken pieces of earthenware, but when she was contemplating some practice of penance to which she felt strongly inclined on account of its severity, and in order to avenge on herself the injuries received by our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, she was forbidden by our Lord to proceed with it. He wished, He said, to give her back in perfect health to her Mother Superior, since she had consigned her to His care. He would be better pleased, therefore, if she sacrificed her desire than if she carried it out. For being Spirit, He said, He wished also a spiritual sacrifice. "I was quite content," she says, "and resigned."

## CHAPTER XXI.

1681—1682.

IT was during the autumn of 1681 that Father de La Colombière visited Paray-le-Monial for the last time. He had stayed there for a few days, as we have already had occasion to mention, when on his way to Lyons, after his return to France at the beginning of the year 1679. It may be well to notice briefly the circumstances which led to his quitting England.

On the 18th of September, 1678, he had written to the Rev. Mother de Saumaise, "What makes me believe that I shall be here still for some time is that there is constantly fresh fruit to be gathered, and that our good Sister Alacoque speaks to me of fresh labours." The outburst, however, of the persecution, which took its rise from Titus Oates' infamous invention of the "Popish Plot," shortly after this date, precipitated events which led to his sudden recal to France. The Chaplain to the Duchess of York was not likely to escape being numbered among the list of the proscribed. At a late hour of the night, guards were placed at the door of his room in St. James', and he was shortly afterwards confronted with his accuser before a committee of the House of Lords. It was difficult to invent any grounds implicating him in the pretended conspiracy, but he was charged with bringing back others to the Catholic religion, and of having

declared that the King, Charles II., was a Catholic at heart. He remained for several months in prison, when, according to the petition of the Lords to His Majesty, he was banished out of the kingdom. Thus, a Martyr only in desire, Father de La Colombière was forced, after witnessing the glorious death of his brethren, to abandon the fruit of his labours and tears until the word of his Superiors should again call him to sufferings or death in the "Land of Crosses," as he styled England.

It was in the beginning of 1679 that Father de La Colombière returned to France, his health broken by his labours, the hardships of his prison, and the suffering which he had been forced to witness. He wrote from Paris to his Provincial at Lyons, on the 16th of January, 1679, to offer his services, telling him that he was sorry to return to his province in such a state of health as to afford but little prospect of his being able to do much that year. He was seized, in fact, with a more violent attack of spitting of blood, and but little hope was entertained of his recovery. He was called, however, to Lyons by his Provincial, and appointed to take the spiritual charge of the young Scholastics of the Society. It was when on his way to Lyons for this purpose that he stopped for about eight days at Paray-le-Monial, which lay on his route. He had occasion here to admire the effects of grace which he witnessed in the soul of Blessed Margaret Mary, and he established here several works of piety which have transmitted and kept alive his name at Paray-le-Monial even through the storms and wreck of the Revolution. "I was ill when I came.

to Paray," he wrote shortly afterwards to Mother de Saumaise; "but in two days I found myself so much better that I was able to work for eight days consecutively from morning till night, without feeling any inconvenience from it. I cannot tell you what consolation I received there. I found things in an admirable state. It seems to me that everything has grown during the time I have been away. I saw Sister Alacoque only once, but I was greatly consoled by the visit. She is, as usual, extremely humble and submissive, and has a great love of the Cross and of humiliations. These are the marks of the spirit by which she is led, and they have never deceived any one."

This visit of Father de La Colombière, though a source of such consolation to Margaret Mary, was not exempt, as was ordinarily the case with her, from some humiliation. For Father de La Colombière having expressed a wish to speak with her in the confessional, and the Mother Greyfié having willingly granted permission for it, complaints were made by some of the Community of the length of time the interview had lasted. The Mother Greyfié was unwilling to lose the opportunity of manifesting Margaret Mary's virtue, and reprehended her publicly in Chapter for what she was well aware might have found a ready excuse in the permission she had herself granted. Margaret Mary, however, true to her favourite virtues, which the occasion gave her so favourable an opportunity of practising, far from urging any such excuse, turned all to the account of humility, meekness, and patience, and said not a word in support of her own innocence.

It was the sight of these virtues in Margaret Mary,

as we have noticed before, that specially impressed Father de La Colombière in his recollection of this visit to Paray, and made him remark to Mother de Saumaise, in writing to her shortly after from Lyons, that these were the proofs which manifested in her the good spirit by which she was led.

Father de La Colombière, employed, as we have seen, at Lyons in the spiritual charge of the young Scholastics of the Society, recommended them earnestly to the prayers of Margaret Mary. Perhaps to this source may be traced the eminent services rendered to the Devotion to the Sacred Heart by one who enjoyed at this time the privilege of being trained under the care of Father de La Colombière. The name of Father Joseph de Galliffet is well known as the author of what may be called a classical work on the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, a standing proof of the energy and zeal with which he devoted himself to maintain the interests of this Devotion, both at Rome and in France, and to establish the Devotion itself on a solid theological basis.

How fervent would have been the prayers of Margaret Mary for such an object as that proposed to her by Father de La Colombière, and how deep an interest she took in seeing the Devotion to the Sacred Heart established by means of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, we may judge from the terms in which she writes on the subject to her Director.\*

\* This letter is commonly regarded as addressed to Father de La Colombière. The reference, however, which is made in it, in such precise terms, to the mission entrusted to the Society of Jesus in connection with the Devotion to the Sacred Heart,

“Why cannot I recount, Rev. Father,” she writes, “all that I know regarding this admirable Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and discover to the whole world the treasures of grace which Jesus Christ has stored up in His adorable Heart, and which He designs to pour forth in profusion on all who shall practise it? I conjure you, Rev. Father, to leave no means untried in order to inspire every one with it. Jesus Christ has shown me, in a manner that admits of no doubt, that it was specially by means of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus that he wished to establish everywhere this solid Devotion, and by means of it to make to Himself an infinite number of faithful servants, perfect friends, and truly grateful children.

“The treasures of graces and blessings contained in the Sacred Heart are unbounded. I do not know that there is any practice of devotion in spiritual life more calculated to raise a soul in a short time to the highest perfection, and to make it relish the true sweetness which is to be found in the service of Jesus Christ.

“I say with confidence that if we only knew how pleasing this Devotion is to Jesus Christ, there is not a Christian, however slight may be his love towards our dear Lord, who would not at once adopt its practice.

“Induce especially Religious persons to embrace it; they will derive such assistance from it that no other means will be required to restore their first fervour and the most exact regularity in the least

would seem rather to assign to it a later date, probably 1689, at which period Margaret Mary had received, as we shall have occasion to see, a special intimation on that subject. The letter, in this case, would have been addressed to Father Rolin, S.J.

regular Communities, and to advance to the highest perfection those in which the most exact regularity already exists.

“Our Divine Lord has assured me that those who are employed in labouring for the salvation of souls shall have the art of touching the most hardened hearts, and will labour with marvellous success, if they are themselves penetrated with a tender devotion to His Sacred Heart.

“As regards persons in the world, they will find in this Devotion all the helps necessary for their state of life: peace in their families, relief in their toils, the blessing of Heaven on all their undertakings, and comfort in their difficulties. In the Sacred Heart they will find a secure place of refuge during life, and more especially at the hour of death. Oh! what a happiness to die after having had constantly during life devotion to the Heart of Him Who is to be our Judge. In a word, there is no one who would not experience every kind of help from Heaven if he had such a grateful love for Jesus Christ as is contained in devotion to His Sacred Heart.”

Father de La Colombière returned, as we have seen, from Lyons to Paray-le-Monial in the autumn of 1681. It was, indeed, in order to close his life in the same favoured spot where he had some years before consecrated it to the Sacred Heart of our Lord. Not that such an event appeared probable; for his health not having improved, contrary to the expectation of his Superiors, from his stay at Paray, it was determined, with the advice of the medical men, that he should try his native air. His brother was already

preparing with due authorisation to take him with him into Dauphiné, when, on the eve of the day fixed for their departure, January 29, 1682, Father de La Colombière received an intimation from Margaret Mary, who had been apprised of his intention, begging him, if he could do so consistently with the orders of his Superiors, not to quit Paray. On his inquiring of her the reason, he received from her in reply the following words in writing—"He has told me that He wishes for the sacrifice of your life here." Upon this, Father de La Colombière determined upon prolonging his stay at Paray. A few days after, he became much worse, and closed his holy life on the 15th of February, 1682, at seven in the evening.

Before his death, Father de La Colombière had placed the note which he had received from Margaret Mary in the hands of his Superior. Margaret Mary sent to beg of the Superior to return it, but received for answer from Father Bourguignet that he would rather part with all the archives of the College than so precious a document.

Margaret Mary received notice of Father de La Colombière's death at four o'clock the following morning. "Pray for him," was the reply she made to the person who brought her the information, "and get all the prayers for him you can." About ten o'clock she wrote to the same person\*—"Do not afflict yourself

\* This pious lady, Mdle. de Bisefrand, was a penitent of Father de La Colombière. She deposed, in 1715, that Father de La Colombière had said to her, before leaving for England, "You will meet, at the Visitation, with a person whose advice you may follow just as if it came from myself. I consult her regarding myself, and I follow her advice."



any longer. Invoke him, and fear nothing. He has now more power to help you than ever."

Margaret Mary lost in Father de La Colombière her best friend. Yet she was not troubled at his loss, so intimately were her affections centred in the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord. This would hardly have been a matter of surprise to the Mother Greyfié, who was so well acquainted with her virtue. She remarked, however, that she did not ask to be allowed to practise any penance or say prayers for him, as she was in the habit of doing for others. On her asking the reason, "My dear Mother," she replied, "he stands in no need of it. He is in a condition to pray to God for us, for he is already in Heaven, through the goodness and mercy of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only, in order to satisfy for some negligence in the exercise of divine love, his soul was deprived of the sight of God from the time of its quitting his body to the moment when his body was laid in the tomb."

"I never observed her regret him," remarks the Mother Greyfié, "but I often heard her express her joy at the thought of his eternal happiness, and thank the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ for all the graces which He had conferred on this worthy Religious, both during his life and at his death."

The body of Father de La Colombière was buried in the church of the Society, where his tomb was frequently visited by the Faithful round about, who had great confidence in the efficacy of his intercession. The precious treasure was confided by the last of the Superiors of the Residence, broken up by the same

blow which struck the whole Society, to the care of the Religious of the Visitation, and by them it was jealously guarded, and secured from the profanations which attended the Revolution. It still rests in the seclusion of the Cloister of Paray, not far from the spot which has recently given up in triumph to the veneration of the Faithful the sacred relics of Blessed Margaret Mary.

Margaret Mary kept as a Feast the anniversary of the death of Father de La Colombière. She addressed him as, "Mirror of all Virtues, Victim of Divine Love, Lily springing from a virgin soil, Angel in purity, Glorious Martyr in desire, who didst breathe forth thy soul in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ." She composed in his honour the following prayer. We may give it in the same spirit in which Blessed Margaret Mary composed it, not anticipating, of course, in any manner, the solemn judgment of the Church, but begging with simple faith his intercession who was designated during his lifetime by our Lord Himself, His "faithful servant."

"O Eternal and Almighty God, Who hast given us in these latter times a model of all sanctity in the person of Thy faithful servant blessed Father Claude de La Colombière, of the Society of Jesus, grant us grace, we beseech Thee, by his holy and powerful intercession with the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, to imitate him in his virtues of charity, simplicity, and humility, that so we may attain to everlasting happiness, through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen."

## CHAPTER XXII.

1682—1684.

THE part which Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié was called upon to take in connection with the mission assigned to Margaret Mary seems to have been to manifest, by the trials to which she subjected her, the divine character of the extraordinary graces with which she was favoured, and, at the same time, to leave in the prudent counsels she gave her, a memorial of the interior trials with which Margaret Mary was visited by her Divine Spouse.

Margaret Mary, united as she was with the Sacred Heart of our Lord, suffered also in union with His mystical Body, the Church. Hence her sufferings increased from time to time at certain periods, which have a character of their own in the ecclesiastical year. The days preceding the penitential season of Lent, which by a strange abuse are often made an occasion of greater offence of God, were to her days of special suffering and expiation, and a time often of extraordinary graces.

Thus, on one of the days preceding the Lent of 1682, which followed shortly after the death of Father de La Colombière, our Lord appeared to her, and placed upon her shoulders a heavy and sharp cross, which He wished her to bear in reparation for the sins committed against Him. "After Holy Communion,"

is the account she gives of this Vision, "my Divine Spouse presented Himself to me under the form of the *Ecce Homo*, loaded with His Cross, and covered all over with wounds and bruises. His adorable Blood was streaming from Him on every side. 'Will no one,' He said, in a sad and mournful tone, 'have pity on Me and compassionate Me, and take part in My sorrow, in the piteous state to which sinners reduce Me, especially at this time?'" Margaret Mary threw herself at His feet and offered herself to Him. Upon this a heavy cross, set with sharp-pointed nails, was placed upon her shoulders. "Overwhelmed by the weight," she says, "I began to understand better the malice of sin, which I detested so much with all my heart that I would rather a thousand times have cast myself into hell than commit a single one deliberately. He told me that it was not enough for me to carry His Cross, but I must also fasten myself to it with Him, in order to bear Him faithful company, by sharing His pains, contempts, outrages, and other indignities." "I abandoned myself," she adds, "to whatever He was pleased to do with me, allowing myself to be fastened to it at His good pleasure." She was visited in consequence with a violent attack of illness; it was thus she felt the sharp points of the cross. This lasted, however, only till the beginning of Lent. On Ash Wednesday she had so completely recovered her strength, that she was able to fast the whole Lent.

In the May of this year, 1682, was opened in the diocese of Autun the Jubilee which had been published by Innocent XI., to call in aid the prayers of

the Faithful in order to check the advance of the Turkish power, which threatened to overwhelm Christendom.\* The effect of these prayers was witnessed in the total overthrow of the Ottoman host by John Sobieski before the walls of Vienna. Sobieski himself gladly referred to this cause the brilliant success of his arms as he prostrated himself to the ground whilst the *Te Deum* was sung in the Cathedral of Vienna in thanksgiving for his marvellous victory. Margaret Mary poured forth her fervent prayers for the common object in which all the Faithful were united, and she received from our Lord Himself special instructions as to the spirit which should animate her petitions.

“He showed me,” she says, “with the severity of a Judge, that it was not so much on account of the Infidels that His justice was irritated, but that it was His own chosen people who had revolted against Him; that they made use of the familiar access which they had to Him to persecute Him; and that as long as they had been faithful to Him they had tied the hands of His justice and left the hands of His mercy free. ‘But if they do not all amend,’ He added, ‘I will make them feel the weight of My avenging justice. One just soul can obtain pardon for a thousand criminals.’” “During Matins,” she continues, “He said to me, ‘Weep and sigh unceasingly

\* Innocent XI. published two Jubilees, one in 1681, the other in 1683. The Jubilee referred to here seems to have been the former of the two. It was opened in the diocese of Autun within the Octave of the Ascension, May 10, 1682, and closed on Trinity Sunday, May 24, 1682.

that My Blood should be shed unprofitably for so many souls who abuse it so greatly in these Indulgences. They are satisfied with cutting down the weeds which grow in their hearts without ever trying to root them out. But woe to these souls which remain defiled and parched in the midst of the very source of living waters! they shall never be cleansed or relieved of their thirst."

Margaret Mary had learnt from our Divine Lord what was His real wish regarding such souls; she knew that He wished to find a means of bringing them back and giving them a place in His Heart. She therefore addressed herself, she tells us, to His Sacred Heart, and said to Him: "It is here, my Lord and my God, that Thy mercy must place all these faithless souls, in order that they may be justified, and glorify Thee for ever." "Yes, I will do so," He replied to her interiorly, "if you promise Me on their part a perfect amendment." "But Thou knowest well, O my God," she rejoined, "that this is not in my power unless Thou enable me by the efficacious merits of Thy Passion."

Our Lord hereupon instructed her that the most pleasing prayer she could offer Him during the holy time of the Jubilee was to ask for three things in His name.

The first was to offer to His Eternal Father the superabundant satisfaction He had made to His justice for sinners upon the Cross, and to beg of Him to apply the merits of His precious Blood to all souls deprived of life by sin, that they might be raised to a life of grace, and might glorify Him eternally.

The second was to offer to Him the burning love of His Sacred Heart, in satisfaction for the tepidity of His chosen people, and to beg of Him, by that ardent love which made Him suffer death, to rekindle their tepid hearts in His service, and to set them on fire with His love, in order that He may be eternally loved by them.

The third was to offer the submission of His will to His Eternal Father, and to beg of Him through His merits that He would complete and perfect His graces, and consummate the accomplishment of His will.

As Margaret Mary was to be conformed in all respects to her Divine Spouse, and as He had already made her share in many of the sufferings of His Passion, so He would bestow upon her His crown of thorns.

This gift was prefigured to her in the following Vision; it was conferred upon her by means of a repetition of accidental blows which she received and which impressed upon her head a continual pain, encircling it like a crown of thorns.

"As I went to Holy Communion," she says, "the Sacred Host appeared to me resplendent as a sun, the dazzling brightness of which I could not bear. Our Lord was in the centre, holding a crown of thorns. Shortly after I had received Him, He placed it on my head, saying to me: 'Receive, My daughter, this crown in sign of that which will shortly be given to you, in order that you may bear a closer resemblance to Me.'"

Margaret Mary did not understand at the time what this meant, but she experienced soon after the

verification of the promise by receiving accidentally on different occasions three severe blows upon the head. In consequence of the violent pain which they left, and which lasted all her life, it seemed as though her head were constantly encircled with thorns.

She would not have exchanged this mysterious gift for any earthly crown ; and it had an especial value in her eyes, from its placing her under the necessity of often remaining awake during a great part of the night, and thus enjoying the converse of our Divine Lord. She was unable to rest her head upon the pillow, and in this she rejoiced to think that she bore some resemblance to Him Who could find no rest for His head upon the Cross. Such are the sentiments which she expresses herself on the subject to Mother de Saumaise in a letter written to her this year, 1682.

So constant were the infirmities under which Margaret Mary laboured at this time that there were not four days throughout the year during which she was free from them. The Mother Greyfié, who knew the power of obedience over her, was glad also at the same time to take advantage of the occasion to obtain from it an additional verification of the divine character of her extraordinary graces. Accordingly, on the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21st, she gave her an order to request of Almighty God the restoration of her health. The following are the terms of the note in which she communicated this order to her : "I command you," she wrote, "in virtue of holy obedience, to ask of God to let me know whether what passes, and has passed in you since I



have had charge of you, comes from His Spirit or from nature, and as a sign that it all comes from God, to suspend your bodily ailments for five months only, so that during that time you may not require any remedies, nor be obliged to quit the ordinary course prescribed by the Rule. But if it is not from God, but only the action of nature in your exterior and interior, ask Him to leave you in your ordinary state, sometimes better, sometimes worse. We shall thus be assured of the truth."

Margaret Mary was required to leave the Infirmary immediately on receiving this note. On her making the prescribed request to our Lord, "I assure you, My daughter," our Lord replied, "that in attestation of the good spirit which conducts you, I would willingly have accorded her as many years of health as she has asked months, and indeed any other proof she might have desired."

It was during the Sacrifice of the Mass that our Lord fulfilled His promise, and restored her to perfect health. "At the moment of the Elevation of the Sacred Host at Mass," writes Margaret Mary, "I felt all my infirmities sensibly taken from me, just as one might take off a dress, and I felt perfectly strong, like a person in robust health."

"I have been ever since in such perfect health," writes Margaret Mary, confidentially, in April, 1683, to Mother de Saumaise at Dijon, "that it seems as if nothing could affect it." And thus she continued, to the admiration of the Community, until exactly the five months had expired, when she immediately fell ill again as before.

The Mother Greyfié might well acknowledge in this, as she did, a clear sign of divine agency in the extraordinary favours bestowed on Margaret Mary. But she would yet ask for a farther proof in ratification of it.

The following addition, which she appended to the note she had previously given to Margaret Mary, will explain the nature of her request:—

“May 25. I hereby declare that I have witnessed in you such a state of health as I had commanded you to ask of our Lord, and I cannot but acknowledge in consequence that what has passed and still passes in your soul proceeds from the incomprehensible goodness and mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I believe it; but I command you again to pray to God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that for the love of Him, and to free me still more from all doubt, He will continue you your health for the full term of a year from the date of the first obedience you received. That period elapsed, I abandon you to His good pleasure in regard of your bodily health; but I require this space of time in order to give me complete assurance.”

Perhaps it was not so much for herself, as Monsignor Languet remarks, that the prudent Mother Superior demanded this second proof, as for the sake of the Community, amongst whom there still existed prejudices regarding the extraordinary favours bestowed on Margaret Mary.

A second time was Margaret Mary restored to health, and she passed the whole period specified without once entering the Infirmary.

But whilst our Lord thus marvellously relieved her bodily ailments, He tried her severely with interior sufferings. She made them known, frequently in writing, as we have already said, to the Mother Greyfié; and in her written replies we possess valuable records of them, as also of the prudent and considerate counsel given by the Mother Superior to her favoured Daughter. We present some extracts from them.

"Be disposed to suffer in peace and silence," she writes at one time, "whatever it may please God to send you in the way of sickness, mortifications, contradictions, humiliations, &c. When offered any relief in your ailments take it, and make an offering to God of the compliance and submission you practise in so doing, in union with the submission and gentleness of our Lord Jesus Christ. This offering will supply for the mortification and suffering you would otherwise have chosen for yourself by bearing your ailment without relief."

"Go to our Lord," she writes again, "full of faith and hope in His infinite mercy and goodness, and with the desire of doing His holy will in everything, in order to testify your love towards Him, and the charity which for the love of Him you wish to cherish towards your neighbours, especially the holy souls suffering in Purgatory. It is a good thought to wish to aid them in making expiation for their sins. In this you have no reason to fear, for you please thereby the goodness of God by following the good movement He gives you. In order the better to do this, place yourself, and all that you have done or may do for the future, in His hands, in order that He may dispose

of all as it shall please Him for the benefit of these holy souls. With this be faithful to your religious obligations and the practice of virtue.

“If the interior disposition in which God places you be one of great pain, anguish, and affliction, persevere in it with humility, gentleness, and patience under the hand of God. In your conversation with your neighbours do not trouble or disturb yourself.

“If you find that you cannot apply yourself with the attention you would wish, nor without pain and suffering, to your spiritual exercises, it is enough that you submit yourself to God, taking as from His hand the trial He is pleased to send you. He will not allow you to be tried beyond your strength.”

“In order to defend yourself against the attacks of your enemy,” she writes, on another occasion, “repeat the Psalm *Dominus illuminatio mea, quem timebo?* Our Blessed Mother considered it very appropriate for such occasions. She would repeat and often sing the words: ‘The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?’ You need not fear the father of lies, for he can do nothing to you unless God allows it. Put your trust in the goodness and charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Do not be troubled at anything that can happen to you. It is the glory of a faithful soldier and a mark of his fidelity to be specially hated by the sworn enemy of his Prince.

“Kings and Princes cannot always secure their soldiers against the malice of their enemies. It is not so with our God, Who cannot be surprised or

deceived, and Who overthrows our enemy when He pleases, and secures us victory in spite of his rage and our weakness, which is made strong by divine grace in proportion to our confidence. Do good and hope in the Lord. This is the recommendation of the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of the Prophet. Continue with good courage to aid in the salvation of your neighbours."

"Live in dependence on the providence of God," she writes again, "and receive alike joy and suffering, peace and trouble, health and sickness, as from His hand. Ask for nothing and refuse nothing, but be ever ready to do and suffer whatever His providence shall assign you. The three desires\* which torment

\* Margaret Mary writes to the Mother de Saumaise at Moulins, January 20, 1682: "He has placed in my soul three persecutors which torment me continually. The first, which produces the other two, is so great a desire of loving Him, that I should wish to see everything changed into flames of love in order that He may be loved in the Adorable Sacrament. I feel constantly urged to suffer, whilst at the same time I feel a terrible repugnance in the inferior part of my soul to suffering, which makes my crosses so heavy and painful that I should have sunk under them a thousand times, did not the adorable Heart of my Jesus strengthen and assist me in all my needs. . . . My soul also suffers extreme anguish at being unable as yet to be separated from my body. The greatest sacrifice that I can make is that of continuing still to live. I accept this, however, even till the Day of Judgment, if my God so wills it, though the thought of being kept apart from my Sovereign Good is harder to bear than a thousand deaths." Towards the close of her life, in her last letter to Father Rolin, she was able to say—"Up to this time I have had three such ardent desires, that I regarded them as three tyrants, which made me suffer a continual martyrdom. These three desires were those of loving God perfectly, of suffering a great deal for His love, and of dying in this ardent love. But now I feel a strange tranquillity of heart, and a cessation of all desires, which astonishes me."

you are good, provided they do not lead you to wish anything contrary to the Rule and obedience. Take care that with the help of God they leave you in a state of holy indifference. Bear these desires in this spirit. Whether they torment you or leave you at rest, it should be the same to you, since you belong wholly to God."

"I have lost the beginning of Matins," she writes again, "in order to read your note and give you these few words in reply, and tell you, my dear child, to rest in peace in the midst of the war within you. He Who has raised it wishes to save you, and it is on this account that He pursues you. Allow yourself to be taken by Him, or rather cast yourself in Holy Communion to-morrow into the arms of that loving confidence which you ought to entertain towards Him. If you have it not already, find it in the Sacred Heart of our adorable Lord, and make use of it as you require it."

Amidst the fears with which Margaret Mary was constantly tormented lest the extraordinary graces she received might be an illusion of the devil, the Mother Greyfié writes to her as follows:—

"Remember, my dear child, what I have told you before, and now tell you again, that there is no evil in what you mention in your last note, and that if it is the devil who seeks to deceive you he will not gain his end unless you deliberately give way to vanity and a desire of esteem on account of the graces you receive. To avoid this, keep yourself humble within yourself, and be gentle and constant in suffering abjection and humiliations, which are sometimes more keenly

felt the smaller and less striking they are. What does it matter whether it be the devil or a good Angel who conducts you, provided you advance on the right way and arrive one day at the perfection God requires of you. The intention of the devil would, doubtless, be bad; yours is to love God and to be humble in body and mind. It will, therefore, turn all to good, and cause our Lord to be glorified in you and by you. This is my desire and hope. Amen."

The following is the last instruction given by the Mother Greyfié to Margaret Mary:—

"May our Lord, Who afflicts you according to His good pleasure in body and mind, be also, by His grace and the mercy of His loving Heart, the strength and consolation of your whole being, both bodily and spiritually. Such, my beloved Sister and dear child, is the wish I make you, and my reply to your note in which you describe your present state. I see nothing in it which need make you fear. Suffer or rejoice in peace, according as God gives crosses or holy affections to your soul. During the rest of the time that I remain in charge of this Community, I grant you Holy Communion the first Friday of each month, according to the intention of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Moreover, I grant it you in addition on the last Saturday of each month, until my deposition, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain of the Divine Heart of her Son a Mother Superior who may be like Him and according to His will; and that she may obtain for me the grace of a true and profound humility, by means of which I may be able to please Him, Who resists the proud and gives

His grace to the humble. I hope that I shall always receive permission, when I shall not have it in my power to take it myself, to communicate as long as I live on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi, as the late good Father de La Colombière declared to be our Lord's desire."

It will be seen from this that the term of the Mother Greyfié's Superiority was near at hand. She was first, however, to close the eyes of one of her Daughters whose last hours were crowned with a favour obtained by the prayers and self-sacrifice of Blessed Margaret Mary. The young Antoinette Rosalie de Sennecé, received into the number of the "Little Sisters"\* at Paray, and prevented by a special grace of our Lord, had made a vow of chastity when only seven years of age. Clothed still in the "Little Habit," she was hardly thirteen when she was suddenly struck with apoplexy. The Mother Greyfié, seeing her in danger of dying in this state, desired Margaret Mary to beg of our Lord in Holy Communion to grant her consciousness in order that she might receive the Sacraments. Margaret Mary did as she was told, and received from our Lord an assurance that her request would be granted on condition of her making a sacrifice, which, she says, cost her more than anything else. This was to bind herself by vow to go without resistance to the Parlour whenever she should be called to it

\* Such was the title given to the children, who, as we have mentioned above, were allowed by St. Francis of Sales, on condition of their showing signs of an inclination to a religious state, to be received for a time into the Monasteries of the Visitation, and to be clothed with the "Little Habit."



according to the order of the Rule. "I exhorted her to this," says the Mother Greyfié, who has left us the account herself, "for she appeared afraid to engage herself. She obeyed, and our Little Sister recovered her consciousness, and received all the succours we were desirous to secure for her for her last journey."

But Margaret Mary did not lose her repugnance, so that she was constantly obliged to do herself violence in order to fulfil her vow as often as she was summoned to the Parlour. It was towards the end of April, 1684, that this favour had been granted to her in connection with the little Antoinette Rosalie de Sennecé. In writing, more than a year afterwards, to Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon, on the 24th of August, 1685, she speaks of the repugnance which she feels as still quite fresh. Our Lord would in this manner allow her fidelity to the engagement—which her charity had led her to contract—to be constantly crowned with fresh merit.

Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié closed her six years' Superiority in the month of May, 1684, and quitted Paray to take charge of the Community of Semur, near Auxerre, of which she had been elected Mother Superior. She maintained an intimate correspondence by letter with Margaret Mary, who delighted to have recourse, with an affectionate and grateful remembrance, to the advice of her former Superior. The Mother Greyfié, on her part, was the means of still giving special encouragement to Blessed Margaret Mary in her difficulties, and assisted her materially to promote the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1684—1686.

THE Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié was succeeded in her charge as Mother Superior by the Rev. Mother Marie Christine Melin.

Marie Christine Melin, Professed of the Monastery of Paray, had for thirty-four years edified the Community by her religious life, when she was chosen in May, 1684, the Mother Superior.

She was distinguished for the virtues which characterised St. Francis of Sales—gentleness and humility; and, according to the description given of her by the Mother Philiberte Emmanuel de Monthoux, Superior of Annecy, she expressed in herself, together with his favourite virtues, even the style of her holy Father. The only charge ever brought against her by her Daughters was one which she might have shared with the Founder of the Visitation, that of being too good. Charged with the care of the Novices under the Mother Greyfié, she had exhibited in a remarkable degree the qualities required by the Constitutions for that important office, and is described by her contemporaries as “gentleness, prudence, and devotion itself.”

A constant witness of the virtues of Blessed Margaret Mary, Marie Christine Melin had learnt to appreciate them highly, and gladly availed herself of

the opportunity now offered her of manifesting her sense of her merit. Margaret Mary, at the time that Marie Christine Melin was chosen Superior, was named her Assistant.

As the prudent severity of the Mother Greyfié, by the trials to which she subjected Margaret Mary, had been calculated to place beyond a doubt the divine character of the favours she received, so the kindness of the Mother Melin served no less clearly, though in a different manner, to show the action of divine grace within her. Amidst the marks of esteem and regard which now attended her, she turned with a regret, which could only take its rise from her supernatural love of our Divine Lord, to the remembrance of the trials which she had experienced at the hands of her late Mother Superior.

"How is it possible, my very honoured and dear Mother," she wrote to her, shortly after her departure from Paray, "that, beset as I am with so many defects and miseries, I should still feel so great a hunger for humiliations and sufferings? As often as I call to mind how good you were in favouring me sometimes with this delightful food, distasteful as it is to nature, and how I am now deprived of this happiness, owing no doubt to the bad use I made of it, I feel overwhelmed with grief. I can truly assure you that nothing attached me so strongly to you as this conduct on your part."

What were the sentiments of the Mother Greyfié towards her late Daughter we may gather from the following letter, which she wrote in reply to a second letter written to her by Margaret Mary under the

apprehension, in consequence of her silence, that she had forgotten her.

“It is impossible, my very dear Sister, I assure you,” writes the Mother Greyfié, “that you should ever lose that place in my heart which our Lord and your virtues have given you. It is no great matter for you, but it is the truth nevertheless, that I love you sincerely, cordially, and unchangeably. You must bear in mind that our good God, Who bears with our little offences against His divine love, would have us also sometimes endure some mortification. And it is all the better for not being of your own choosing, but ordered for you by His divine providence, which has given you, in place of a severe Mother, a kind and good-natured one. Do not be uneasy. It is not difficult for our good God to find a means; and though this kind Mother does not mortify and humble you as I did, He will find others to supply what you desire, according to His will. So that you will not die of hunger for want of having something to suffer.”

Our Lord, on His part, richly repaid Margaret Mary's desire of resembling Him in His sufferings by the graces He lavished upon her.

“My Sovereign Master,” she says, giving an account by obedience of the manner in which she passed her Retreat this year, “bestowed His graces upon me in such profusion that it would be difficult for me to express it. I will only say that for several days before entering on it, my God impressed me so strongly with the desire and the spirit of it, that it seemed as though my whole being, body and soul, were absorbed by it. He had so concentrated all my powers within Himself that

I had no longer any liberty but to abandon myself to His sovereign will."

On the first day, our Lord presented her His Sacred Heart, as a furnace of love, into which she seemed to be cast, and she was at once penetrated with so burning a fire that it appeared as though she would be reduced to ashes. She heard at the same time the following words: "This is the divine Purgatory of My love, in which you must be purified; I will afterwards make you find in It an abode of light, and, finally, of union and transformation." "This," she says, "He allowed me to experience so effectually during the whole of my Retreat, that sometimes I did not know whether I was in Heaven or on earth, so entirely was I filled with God and lost in Him."

Margaret Mary felt some uneasiness, in consequence, during the first days of the Retreat, because she was thus prevented thinking of her sins. Our Lord, however, removed her difficulty in the following manner:—"On the night preceding the day on which I was to make my confession, I felt myself awakened," she says, "and in a moment all my sins were set before me as if written out. When I wished to make my confession, I had but to read them." "I made my confession," she adds, "with so many tears and with such contrition that it seemed as if my heart would break with sorrow for having offended His infinite goodness, Who, meanwhile, was sensibly present to my soul."

After these three days, on receiving Holy Communion she was placed, as she describes it, in an abode of light and glory, and received so many favours, that a single hour of such joy is enough, she

says, to counterbalance all that the Martyrs have ever suffered.

“In the excess of His charity,” she says, “He espoused my soul to Himself by an ineffable kind of union, changing my heart into a flame of the devouring fire of His pure love, that it might consume every earthly love that approached it.”

Our Lord gave her to understand that, since He destined her to pay continual homage to His state of Victim in the Blessed Sacrament, she should continually sacrifice to Him her whole being by love, adoration, and conformity to the dying life He lives in the Blessed Eucharist, and that she should practise her vows on this model.

The resolutions which she was led to form in this Retreat all bear the stamp of her love for the Sacred Heart of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Her silence should be in remembrance of His. When she spoke, it would be to render homage to the Eternal Word hidden under the sacramental veils.

In taking her refection, she would think of the divine support with which He feeds the soul in the Blessed Eucharist.

Her repose should be to honour the eternal repose of the Son in the bosom of His Father, and His mysterious repose in the Blessed Sacrament; her troubles and mortifications, to repair the outrages offered to Him in this Mystery of His love.

Her prayers should be offered in union with the prayer which the Sacred Heart is ever offering in the Blessed Sacrament; her recitation of the Divine Office

should be united to the praises which are ever ascending from the adorable Heart to His Eternal Father.

"In all that I do and suffer," she says, "I will enter into the Sacred Heart, to find there the intentions which should animate me, to unite myself to Him, and to beg His assistance."

At the end of each action she would offer it to the Sacred Heart to repair whatever was defective in it.

If she committed any fault, after doing penance for it she would offer in satisfaction one of the virtues of the Sacred Heart in requital for the injury done to the Divine Majesty.

In the evening, she would place in the adorable Heart of our Lord all that she had done during the day that He might purify and perfect whatever was blemished or imperfect in her actions, and render them worthy of being placed in His Sacred Heart, leaving Him to dispose of them all at His good pleasure.

On her feeling apprehensive that she should not be able to carry out these resolutions, our Lord assured her, as she went to Holy Communion, that He would come Himself and impress upon her heart the life which He lives in the Blessed Eucharist, and give her strength to do what He asked of her.

Our Blessed Lady also, who had always taken part in the favours she received, presented herself to her during her Retreat, and placing her Divine Son in her arms, "Take Him," she said, "He will teach you what you are to do."

As Margaret Mary had been chosen by our Blessed Lord to communicate to the Order of the Visitation, and through it to the Church, the precious treasure of

the Devotion to His Sacred Heart, He would place her now in a position in which she would be able to insinuate the spirit of the Devotion into hearts that would most readily receive it, and serve as a means of transmitting it to others. She had been appointed Assistant about six months when, the Mistress of Novices falling dangerously ill, she was selected for that important office. The Novices, already regarding her as a Saint, had made earnest petitions that she might be appointed their Mistress, and to their happiness they enjoyed her example and instructions for two years.

She soon gained their confidence and affection by her kind and charitable conduct towards them; and whatever she taught them, she led the way by the force of her own example.

Knowing that any effect, to be lasting, in the formation of their character, must be the work of grace, which commonly acts in harmony with the natural disposition, she was careful to study their natural tendencies and capabilities, and to guide each according to the estimate she formed of them.

She endeavoured then to inspire them with a great esteem for their vocation, and to impress upon them the necessity of mortifying their humours; and, as life in Religion is essentially a struggle, she taught them that it required an unbroken and intrepid spirit.

Her management of her Novices was characterised by gentleness tempered by firmness, and her judgment was shown by the prudence with which she suited the various practices to the capacity of each. She set her face strongly against whatever bore the character of



mere human attachment, from a sense of the obstacles it places in the way of a solid love of God.

She wished them always to come to her with great confidence, and was always ready to assist them in their difficulties; she enjoyed singular advantages for rendering them such assistance, for God not unfrequently made known to her their interior dispositions, and the means of turning them to the best account.

She endeavoured to lead them to a true detachment, teaching them to rise above trifles, and to fix their affections on God alone. To this end she aimed at inspiring them with a love of a hidden life, in which they would find the source of a true devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord. With this view also she proposed to them as a practice, by way of preparation for celebrating the approaching day fixed by our Lord for honouring His Sacred Heart, to animate all their actions with this interior spirit. She endeavoured also to lead them to the same end by frequently representing to them the love of our Blessed Lord, and the little return it met with on the part of mankind.

It was, indeed, by means of the simple devotion of her Novices, that our Lord chose to inaugurate, so to say, the practice of the Devotion to His Sacred Heart, which, from this humble beginning, was to strike so deep a root, and bring forth such abundant fruit in His Church.

Let us hear Blessed Margaret Mary's own account of this simple but eventful incident, as she describes it in the narrative of her life: "I found no means," she says, "of making known the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, which was all that I desired. The following was the first occasion His goodness provided me with. The

Feast of St. Margaret, my patron Saint, happening to fall on a Friday,\* I begged of our Novice Sisters, whom I had charge of at that time, to pay to the Sacred Heart of our Lord whatever little marks of respect they proposed to pay me on that day. This they gladly agreed to do. They prepared accordingly a little altar, and upon it they placed a little picture of the Sacred Heart, sketched with a pen.† To this we endeavoured to show every mark of honour which the Divine Heart Itself suggested to us. This drew upon me, and upon them also, many humiliations, contradictions, and mortifications."

These contradictions arose from the desire Blessed Margaret Mary had that others of the Community should have an opportunity of taking part with the Novice Sisters in the honour paid to the Sacred Heart of our Lord. With this view she had sent one of her Novices to invite some of the elder Sisters, on whose piety and discretion she thought she could rely. She found, however, that she had not taken sufficiently into account that mysterious opposition which the Devotion was destined to meet with, even in the cloisters of the Visitation, a faint shadow of the more bitter hostility against which it was to make its way in the world. The proposal was summarily rejected by the Sisters, who replied that it was not for Novices or their Mistress to introduce novelties, and that the Rule

\* July 20, 1685.

† This interesting memorial of the first public manifestation of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart is in the keeping of the Sisters of the Visitation at Turin. They have been in possession of it since 1738, when it was presented to them by the Community of Paray.

expressly prohibited the adoption of new prayers or Offices. "Go and tell your Mistress," was the answer sent by one\* who was highly esteemed by Margaret Mary, "that true devotion consists in the practice of our Rules and Constitutions ; this is what she should teach you, and what you should practise."

The Novice charged with this commission† was greatly surprised at the reception she met with, and hesitated to acquaint her Mistress with the circumstances as they occurred. She merely told her that some were prevented coming. "Say rather," replied Margaret Mary, in a firm though calm and humble tone, "that they will not ; but the Sacred Heart will find a means of making them yield. He will have all from love, and nothing by constraint. We must wait for the time which He has fixed for Himself." The time fixed was no later than the following year, as we shall have occasion to see.

Margaret Mary spent the day with her Novices: in honouring the Sacred Heart. She thanked them repeatedly, saying: "You could not, my dear Sisters, have given me a greater pleasure than by these acts of homage to the Sacred Heart, and by consecrating yourselves to It. What a happiness for you, that our Lord should have made choice of you to begin this Devotion."

The joy which the Novices had experienced in thus passing the day was destined to meet with a sudden check. The matter was noised through the Community,

\* Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures, of whom mention has been made.

† Sister Frances Rosalie Verchère, who deposed to the circumstances in the juridical process held in 1715.

and complaints were made of their conduct, and of that of their Mistress. They were reprimanded, and forbidden to make any similar external demonstration. The Mother Superior, whose conduct was characterised by a love of peace, thought it right to forbid Margaret Mary any exterior practice which might come under the notice of the Community, but allowed her the consolation, at the same time, of making use of these devotions within the Novitiate.

Margaret Mary, in the meantime, felt nothing so much in all that was taking place as the injury which she feared might be done to the Sacred Heart. She had recourse in her difficulty to our Lord Himself. "Fear nothing, My Daughter," He replied; "I will reign in spite of My enemies, and of all who may think to oppose Me." She remained, upon this, in peace, and left all in His hands, though threatened by some of the Community that, if she continued her design, the Superior of the Monastery should be informed of it, that he might, by his authority, put a check to these novelties.

Margaret Mary would often repeat to herself the words which our Lord Himself had taught her, and which she adopted, in a manner, as her device.\* They express the secret of that divine peace which reigned undisturbed in her soul amidst all her trials and contradictions.

Perhaps what she suffered now held no small place in that mysterious prospect which was given her by our Lord in a former visit with which He favoured her,

\* Je veux tout souffrir sans me plaindre,  
Puisque son amour m'empêche de rien craindre.

and in which He showed her all that she was to suffer during the rest of her life. But our Lord imparted to her, at the same time, a source of divine strength, which would enable her to bear all that was in store for her. "He told me," she says, "that I had nothing to fear, for that He designed to confer upon me a fresh and still greater grace. It was that I should never lose sight of Him, and that I should constantly enjoy His intimate presence." "This favour," she adds, "I regard as surpassing all that He has ever bestowed upon me, and from that day I have always had my Saviour intimately present with me."\*

\* It may be interesting to notice the description which Margaret Mary herself gives of the intimate presence of our Divine Lord which she enjoyed. "He instructs me Himself," she says, in writing to Mother de Saumaise at Moulins, "to describe it to you in the following manner: It is as if a powerful monarch, urged with a desire of exercising his charity, were to cast his eyes upon the poorest and most wretched of all his subjects in order to enrich him with a profusion of favours, the greatest of which should be that he would deign to abase himself to walk constantly by the side of this poor wretched creature, bearing a torch in his hand, and clothed in all the splendour of his royal robes; and then, after thus showing himself, should hide the light in the darkness of night, in order to give this poor creature more confidence to approach him, to listen to him and speak to him with confidence, and to receive his caresses, whilst he took care to provide for his wants and all that concerned him."

How similar, as we have already had occasion to notice, is the account given by St. Teresa in her description of what she speaks of as the highest kind of interior Vision. "It seemed to me," she says, "that our Lord was constantly walking at my side. However, as I saw no image, I could not say under what form; but I felt clearly that He was always on my right, and was witness of all I did. . . . In this interior Vision," she says, "the soul knows clearly, that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Blessed Virgin, is present; we see that the Sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ bears us company, and wishes also to favour us with His graces."

It would seem to be in reference to the trial which Margaret Mary was now undergoing that the Mother Greyfié writes to her towards the close of this year. "It seems to me," she says, "that were I in your place I would keep myself close to, or rather within, the Sacred Heart of our Divine Master, and remain there entirely abandoned to His care and good pleasure."

Amongst the restrictions which the Mother Melin had thought it well, for the sake of peace, after the incidents on the Feast of St. Margaret, to impose on Margaret Mary, none was more deeply felt by her than the prohibition to communicate on the first Friday of the month.\* She bore it in silence, but our Lord, Who had enjoined her this practice, Himself interposed, as He had done on a former occasion, to enable her to carry out His wishes. A young Professed Sister† fell dangerously ill, and in a few days seemed to be at the point of death. As Margaret Mary was praying for her recovery, our Lord intimated to her that the Sister would continue in the same state until the Mother Superior renewed her permission for Holy Communion

\* Monsignor Languet, though with some hesitation, refers this incident to the period of the Mother Greyfié's Superiority; but it appears, from the documents of the Monastery of Paray, that its proper place is here, about August, 1685.

† Sister Frances Rosalie Verchère. She was one of Margaret Mary's first Novices, the Professed Sisters remaining in the Noviceship for a year after their Profession. She was joint authoress with Péronne Rosalie de Farges (also a Professed Novice) of the contemporaneous memoirs of Blessed Margaret Mary, which, together with Margaret Mary's own narrative, form the principal authentic documents relating to her life. It was in the arms of these, her two former Novices, as she had herself predicted, that Blessed Margaret Mary expired.

as He had ordered. Margaret Mary felt herself in a state of most trying perplexity. On the one hand she was desirous of acting in obedience to her Mother Superior, whilst, on the other, our Lord pressed her strongly to acquaint her how displeasing her prohibition was to Him.

She resolved, in her difficulty, to have recourse to the advice of one of the elder Sisters,\* in whose virtue she had great reliance, and wrote to her in confidence a note, in which she explained to her the grounds of her painful perplexity.

Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures counselled her to explain the whole matter to the Mother Superior: Margaret Mary consented, though with extreme reluctance, and told the Mother Melin what our Lord had given her to understand. The Mother Melin consented at once to grant what was required of her, on condition of Margaret Mary praying for the recovery of the invalid. Margaret Mary did so, and Sister Frances Rosalie was pronounced at once out of danger, whereas, a short time before, little hope was entertained of her recovery, owing to the severe pains she suffered, and of which the medical men could give no account.

The marvellous change in the Sister's health was, however, rendered still more remarkable by a further circumstance. For whether it was that the Mother Melin forgot to accord the actual permission to communicate, or that Margaret Mary supposed that a

\* This was Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures, whose name has been mentioned before, and who was destined to play an important part, as will be seen, in the recognition of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart by the Community of Paray.

second permission was necessary, she did not resume her Communion, but continued to beg of the Sacred Heart the Sister's recovery. Our Lord told her that her Novice should not recover until she had resumed Holy Communion, according to His wish. Margaret Mary's repugnance to whatever wore the air of singularity kept her back from making the request a second time. She continued thus for five or six months, visiting the Sister in the meantime, and encouraging her to turn her sickness to account, when she determined at length to tell the Mother Superior what she had heard from our Lord. The Mother Melin gave the requisite permission at once, and the Sister was at once restored to perfect health. It is not necessary to say what joy this event caused Margaret Mary, especially as it left her once more free to receive our Lord in Holy Communion.

In her manner of conducting her Novices, her instructions, drawn as they were from the Sacred Heart of our Lord, were likely to be of a solid character. The foundation of all else she would have laid in a perfect conformity with the will of God. As a consequence of this, she inculcated especially unreserved obedience to the Rules. She could not endure any deliberate faults, and insisted greatly on fidelity to the inspirations of grace. She strove to ground the Novices in humility, and urged them to keep themselves disengaged from all trifles, in order that they might truly give their hearts to God. The treasure of a Religious, she told them, should be the Sacred Heart of our Lord.

She endeavoured to inspire them with a great desire



of Holy Communion, and taught them to offer to our Lord in return a renunciation of their own inclinations and the conquest of their passions. What she especially desired to see in her Novices was a love of prayer, and its attendant, a love of silence and recollection. Neither, she knew, could spring except from a generous spirit of mortification. She endeavoured, by her conversations, to enkindle in their hearts that fervour which would enable them to persevere in it ; and in order to supply them with fresh vigour in the practice of piety, she would vary the exercises of it.

Arrived, as she was herself, at the highest sanctity, Margaret Mary manifested, in the direction of her Novices, that discretion and prudence which is the key-stone and crown of all virtue. She knew that they must often fall into faults in which there would be but little that was deliberate, and she taught them to rise from them with advantage, and gather from them a fresh increase of humility. She would have them also seek, in the Sacred Heart of our Lord, the opposite virtue which they might offer to Almighty God in reparation of their fault, and advance with renewed confidence in the way of perfection.

She recommended them to call to mind, as often as they heard the clock strike, that happy moment when the adorable Heart of our Lord was first formed by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Ever Blessed Virgin, and to thank the Sacred Heart for the infinite love It has manifested to men.\*

\* We have occasion to observe that Margaret Mary not only instilled this practice into the minds of her Novices, but inspired her late Mother Superior also with the desire of establishing it in

The Novices received her suggestions with great alacrity, and, under pretence that they were afraid they might otherwise forget them, they induced her to give them in writing. This she did with great good-nature, in spite of the great dislike she had to write anything. She required, as a condition, that they should consecrate themselves more entirely to the Sacred Heart of our Lord.

The devil, who had threatened to persecute her unrelentingly, and knew well the value of the work she was doing, did not fail to do all in his power to get her out of the Noviceship. Perhaps, also, the low opinion she entertained of herself led her to use efforts herself to this effect. But she learnt, from a Vision with which our Lord favoured her at Christmas (1685), that she was still to continue in this charge for another year. Our Lord gave her to understand that He designed to make use of her Novices as foundation-stones to the building He wished to raise, and showed them to her, whilst she heard at the same time the words: "Feed My lambs." She continued, then, to strengthen them in devotion to the Sacred Heart, encouraging them to advance in solid virtue by fidelity to their Institute. "The way of God for us," she told

her Community at Semur. "I have bethought myself lately," writes the Mother Greyfié to her in 1688, in almost the same terms, "of suggesting to our Sisters here the pious practice of calling to mind, as often as they hear the clock strike, the blessed and happy moment when the adorable Heart was formed by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the most pure womb of our Sovereign Lady, and of thanking the adorable Heart for Its infinite charity to us." Perhaps we may discover, in this pious practice, the germ of the perpetual adoration of the Sacred Heart which is embodied in what is now known as the "Guard of Honour."

them, "is by our holy Rules." "Feed your hearts, my dear Sisters," she would say, "with them. They will introduce you to that interior life, that life hidden with God, which leads us to pure suffering, in which the perfection of love is found."

So deeply engraved in her heart was the desire of seeing the Devotion to the Sacred Heart established, that she found it difficult to speak of anything else. "If you only knew, my dear Mother," she wrote at this time to the Mother Greyfié, "how strongly urged I feel to honour the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ! It seems to me that I live only for this."\* "Our Lord has again favoured me with a visit," she added, "and assured me, that the pleasure He takes in being known, loved, and honoured by His creatures is so great, that He has promised me, if I mistake not, that all who shall be devoted and consecrated to Him shall never perish; that, as He is the source of all blessings, He will shed them abundantly on every spot where the picture of the Divine Heart shall be exposed and honoured; that He will give union to disunited families; protect and assist those that are in any necessity and address themselves to Him with confidence; that He will pour the sweet unction of His burning charity upon all Communities that honour It and place themselves under Its special protection, and that He will turn aside all the blows of divine justice in order to restore them to grace when

\* Margaret Mary, in writing to Mother de Saumaise, describes her employment, as Mistress of Novices, as an exercise of the love of the Sacred Heart. "The love of the Sacred Heart," she says, "forms at present my whole occupation, whether in prayer or in anything else."

they are fallen from it. He has given me to understand that His Sacred Heart is the holy of holies, the holiness of love; that He wishes to be known now that He may act as Mediator between God and men, for He is all-powerful to procure peace and to obtain mercy for us by turning aside the chastisements which our sins have drawn down upon us.”\*

On the Feast of her holy Founder, at the beginning of the following year, 1686, Margaret Mary received, as usual, special light and graces with reference to the mission with which she was intrusted, of promoting the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and was instructed regarding the intimate connection of the Devotion with the spirit of the Order. “I will tell you, my dear Mother, as I have no secrets with you,” she writes to the Mother de Saumaise, “that on the day of the Feast of our holy Founder, it seemed to me that this great Saint gave me to understand very sensibly the great desire he had that the Sacred Heart should be known,

\* This letter appears to have been decisive in its effect upon the mind of the Mother Greyfié. Though she had always encouraged her former Daughter in her devotion to the Sacred Heart, she now ambitioned to share with her the title of Disciple of the Sacred Heart. She raised an oratory in honour of the Sacred Heart, and placed in it a picture of the Sacred Heart which she had had made, and celebrated with solemnity the Feast of the Sacred Heart. She sent a miniature of this painting to Margaret Mary, and twelve pictures also for as many of the Novices, who were most ardent in their devotion to the Sacred Heart. We may judge of the difficulties which Margaret Mary had met with when we find her writing in reply to the Mother Greyfié that, so far from anticipating such a present, she had expected that she was going to tell her to give up all thought of attempting to introduce the Devotion. The sight of the welcome present seemed to give her, she says, a new life.

honoured, and loved throughout his whole Order, saying that it was the most efficacious means he could obtain for raising it from its falls, and preventing its yielding to the designs of a spirit most foreign to it,\* full of pride and ambition, by which the devil seeks to ruin the spirit of humility and simplicity, which is the foundation of the whole building. He will not be able to succeed if we have the Sacred Heart for protector, defender, and support."

The encouragement she received from her holy Founder served to prepare Margaret Mary for a very severe trial to which she was herself shortly to be exposed, on occasion of a Postulant, whom her friends, regardless of her want of vocation, were desirous of forcing, in a manner, into the Order. A virtue, less solidly founded than that of the humble Apostle of the Sacred Heart, would probably have sunk under it.

\* This, it would seem, was Jansenism, which made many attempts to gain an entrance into the Order. It found an invincible antagonist in the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The Monastery of Paray-le-Monial remained always untainted by it.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1686—1688.

THE family of Vichy Chamron, one of the most powerfully connected in the province of Burgundy, had given many of its members as subjects to the Monastery of Paray. Three sisters of the powerful family d'Amanzé, allied to the family de Chamron, had made their Profession in the monastery some years before, and one of them was still living in 1686. The Sisters d'Athose and Lévy Châteaumorand were also connected with the same family ; whilst amongst the young persons trained under the care of the monastery there were at this time three of the family d'Amanzé, and two also of the family of Vichy Chamron.

It was to this family, de Chamron, so powerful in the province, and interwoven by so many ties with the Community, that the young Postulant belonged, the question of whose vocation was to involve Blessed Margaret Mary in such trying difficulties. Placed in the monastery with the intention that she should there take the Religious Habit, she stood in too great an awe of the displeasure of her father, the Count de Chamron, to avow her real disinclination for the life of the Daughters of the Visitation. But though she passed the scrutiny of the rest of the Community, she could not escape the judgment of her Mistress, who, viewing

the truth in the light of the Sacred Heart, did not fail to discover the want of a true vocation. This conviction, after taking every means in her power to satisfy herself upon the point, Margaret Mary communicated to the Mother Superior, and recommended, with a view to avoid giving more publicity than was necessary, that she should be removed by her family. Margaret Mary's judgment regarding the vocation of the young Postulant was met with marked displeasure on the part of several of the Community, and created great indignation amongst the members of her family without. Margaret Mary was called a visionary; she was declared to be a hypocrite; it was said that she was deceived by the devil; and that it was evident that she was incompetent to form a judgment of a true vocation. Margaret Mary, nevertheless, remained firm in her judgment, and bore all that was said against her with the greatest meekness and in silence.

Amongst those who were most bitter against her was the Cardinal de Bouillon, an intimate friend of the illustrious family of Chamron. He was Lord of Paray in virtue of his dignity of Abbot *in commendam* of Cluny. He was, perhaps, that powerful Prince of whom Blessed Margaret Mary speaks, and before whom the threat was held out that she should be compelled to appear. The humble but unwavering spirit, however, of the Disciple of the Sacred Heart did not for a moment quail before his power, though she was threatened with dismissal from her office, and with even being thrown into prison. She maintained her tranquillity amidst all with a peace and gentleness which filled the Community with admiration.

What, perhaps, was the cause of a severer trial to Margaret Mary was the opinion which was formed of her by a Religious in high position, a friend of the family of Chamron, who enjoyed in common estimation a reputation for great sanctity. Perhaps his personal regard for the family of the young Postulant was allowed in some measure to blind his judgment. He lost no opportunity of speaking in disparaging terms of the holy Mistress of Novices; he charged her with hypocrisy and obstinacy, called her a visionary, and declared that her seeming virtue was mere illusion.

Nothing serves to put the true humility of Margaret Mary in a clearer light than the manner in which she received these charges against herself. "I see nothing in myself but what deserves eternal punishment," she writes to the Mother Greyfié, to whom she lays open in confidence the secrets of her heart, "for I have not only been deceived, but I have been unhappy enough to deceive others by my hypocrisy, without, however, intending it. What confirms me in this opinion of myself is that such also is the opinion of that good servant of God. I have reason to be most thankful to the goodness of our Lord for having brought him here to put an end to the false opinion which was entertained of me."

The only grief which Margaret Mary felt in consequence of the persecution raised against her arose from the thought that God might be thereby offended. "I beg of you to tell me," she wrote to the Mother Greyfié, shortly afterwards, "whether I ought to allow myself to be afflicted at all the annoying consequences produced by this cross, because of God being greatly



offended thereby. It is this alone which causes me pain."

In the midst, however, of these trials which our Lord allowed her to experience at the hands of one Religious, He had provided her an unexpected consolation, and in a manner she little anticipated, from the charity of another. A good Religious, "a great servant of God" (it is thus she names him in mentioning the circumstance to the Mother Greyfié), wrote to her at the beginning of Lent to tell her that, whilst saying Mass he had felt strongly urged to offer the Holy Sacrifice every Saturday during the year for her intention. This valuable present, it may be mentioned to show the charity of Margaret Mary, she offered to share with the Mother Greyfié.

Her Novices, in the meantime, who entertained so deep a regard for their Mistress, and who had so many opportunities of observing her kindness and consideration for the young Postulant, could not conceal their sense of the injustice done to her, and gave open expression to their feelings in defence of her. Margaret Mary, however, at once checked this outburst of natural feeling, and reproved them severely for indulging in sentiments so little in harmony with the designs of the Sacred Heart of our Lord, Who would have them manifest their love for Him by bearing in silence the trials which He sent them. "It is He Himself," she said, "Who has allowed us to meet with this cross, in order to prepare us for His Feast; and instead of embracing it with love, we seek only to shake it off and rid ourselves of it." "This comes," she continues, "from the too great love we have of ourselves; this

makes us fear to lose our reputation and the good opinion which we wish others to entertain of us, and leads us to justify ourselves, to look upon ourselves as innocent and others guilty, and to think that we are always in the right and others in the wrong."

As regards herself, it was the intimate union she enjoyed with the Sacred Heart of our Lord that gave her the secret of preserving profound peace, and even joy, in the midst of the storm of persecution which assailed her. "It seemed as though all hell were let loose against me," is the description she gives of it, "and as if all conspired to annihilate me." "I enjoyed, however," she says, "great peace within, and I never felt such joy as when I was menaced with imprisonment, and with being forced to appear, like my good Master, before an earthly Prince, as an object of mockery, and as a visionary carried away by fancies and illusions."

Our Lord had provided her a firm support in her severe trials by giving her a wise and enlightened Director in the person of Father Rolin, S.J. Father Ignatius Rolin had come to Paray-le-Monial, in 1685, as Superior of the Residence of the Fathers. He came strongly prejudiced against Margaret Mary; but his first acquaintance with her was sufficient to change his sentiments, and the second interview convinced him of the high degree of sanctity to which he was called to direct her. Margaret Mary, on her part, was led to place great confidence in him, and she received great assistance from him in the difficult position in which she was now placed.

"The spirit which guides you is not a spirit of

darkness," he wrote to her, in reply to a question which her distrust of herself had led her to put to him; "its guidance is good, for it is always in subordination to obedience, and leaves you in peace when once your Mother Superior has spoken. I do not think, after considering the matter in the presence of our Lord, that, in the persecutions from which you suffer, it is the devils who are allowed to exercise their rage against you. It is the work of divine love, and it is a consolation to think that He makes use of souls most dear to Him to make you suffer. The Martyrs had not this consolation in their torments. I allow you to attribute all that happens to your own fault, though all is rather an effect of the goodness of God than of His justice."

Margaret Mary had feared lest his own reputation for judgment and prudence might suffer from his appearing as the advocate of her cause. "Fear nothing for me," writes Father Rolin, "the holy Father de La Colombière is my security and guarantee."

In regard of the threats held out to her of denunciation before the tribunal of an earthly potentate, the "earthly Prince," of whom she speaks, of dismissal from her office, and imprisonment, the counsels of her wise Director breathe the spirit of the Apostles, who, we are told, "went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."\* He urges her to find her joy in the thought of the love of our Blessed Lord, and to leave all in peace in His hands. "Even though all that is uttered against you were proclaimed to the whole world, it would only be a further grace,"

\* Acts v. 41.

he says, "conferred upon you by our Lord. Let them, then, lay information before whom they please, you have reason only to rejoice at it. Dismissal, imprisonment, all is but the love of Jesus Christ for you. What I ask of you is an entire abandonment of yourself to Him, and a heart ready to do and suffer everything."\*

The time had now come which our Lord had fixed for spreading the divine fire of the Devotion to His Sacred Heart to the whole Community. The circumstances under which this took place were so surprising that it was manifest that this was indeed the "change of the right hand of the Most High," and that our Lord, in Whose hand are all hearts, had Himself turned the hearts of all to His most Sacred Heart.†

\* It would seem that, as our Blessed Lady had always taken part in the great graces bestowed on Margaret Mary, so it was through her intercession that she received light to guide her in this question of the vocation of the young Postulant which involved her in such troubles. We may infer this from what she writes at a later date to Sister de Thélis at Lyons, who had consulted her regarding a Novice. "We should have recourse," she says, "to the Blessed Virgin, our good Mother and Advocate, who will not, as I hope from her goodness, refuse you her aid. Say for this intention the Thirty Days' Prayer for a month, to beg of her that, if the Novice is not suited for you, she would prevent her being received to her holy Profession. I assure you that this prayer has produced marvellous effects in this Community in similar cases. Within the last twelve or thirteen years it has obtained for us from our good Mother this favour, that no one has ever engaged herself unless suited to our kind of life. For either they ask to leave when we are on the point of receiving them, or some obstacle arises to prevent their being received."

† Even in the height, however, of the opposition raised against Margaret Mary, we have reason to see that there was an under-current, as it were, of feeling in favour of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Margaret Mary wrote to the Mother de Saumaise on the 20th of March, 1686: "Our very honoured Mother (the

The instruments, too, which He used to effect His purpose were those especially who had hitherto been most marked in their opposition to the Devotion.

On the last day of the Octave of Corpus Christi, Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures\* requested Margaret Mary to allow her to have the picture of the Sacred Heart which had been sent by the Mother Greyfié, as she wished to expose it in the Choir, and to invite the Sisters to join in paying the homage of their devotion to it. It is hardly necessary to say that it was with feelings of great joy that Margaret Mary acceded to her request, though she made no remark, and waited, not without many a fervent prayer, to see the issue.

The following morning, Friday, the day fixed by our Blessed Lord for the Feast, Sister Mary Magdalen prepared in due time a little altar, if such it might be called, in front of the "grille;" upon it she placed the picture, decked with flowers, and in a notice written with her own hand, she invited all the Spouses of our

Mother Melin) hopes that our Community will raise later a chapel containing a beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart." The Mother Greyfié also, writing to Margaret Mary on the 18th of May, 1686, seems to express an anticipation of what was to take place shortly afterwards. "All will go on well," she says, "with God's help; His holy will be every day more respected and better carried out."

\* Mention has been made more than once of Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures, one of the elder Sisters. She is styled by her contemporaries, on account of her exact regularity, "A living Rule." Margaret Mary placed great confidence in her virtue, though, from her attachment to the letter of the Rule, she had shown a marked opposition to every attempt to introduce the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, which she regarded with groundless apprehension as an innovation on the simplicity of the Institute.!

Lord to come and pay their homage to His Sacred Heart.

All were greatly surprised, and not the less so on finding that the invitation came from one who had been hitherto so marked in her opposition to the Devotion. All difficulties seemed at once to disappear ; all combined by giving up their hearts, as by one consent ; they acknowledged that the change was truly the work of God, and they saw in it the verification of what Margaret Mary often said, that "the Heart of Jesus would reign in spite of those who opposed It."

All were enthusiastic also in doing what lay in their power to have a picture executed of the Sacred Heart ; for it was to this also that the invitation of Sister des Escures had extended.

Even the Little Sisters contributed from the money supplied them by their parents for their little amusements. The Lay Sisters especially distinguished themselves by the zeal with which they laboured in the garden in order to be able to make an offering towards the work they had so much at heart.

The Mother Melin, however, judged that it would be better to wait till they should be in a position to build a chapel in honour of the Sacred Heart. It was indeed commenced this year, and was solemnly opened in 1688. It was built in the garden within the enclosure.

This act of homage to the Sacred Heart proved a source of abundant graces to the Mother Melin, and Margaret Mary declared, "That our Lord was so much gratified with the care she had taken to procure the erection of a sanctuary in which His Sacred Heart might be honoured, that in recompense He promised

her the singular favour of dying in an act of pure love." The fruits of this marvellous establishment of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart were not slow in showing themselves in the Community by a striking renewal of fervour, which seemed to gain fresh strength every day.

Margaret Mary, in her joy at what had so wonderfully taken place, made her Novices join with her on this auspicious day, June 21, 1686,\* in a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving. "I have now nothing more to desire," she said to them, "since the Sacred Heart is known, and begins now to reign over the hearts of others. Do what you can, my dear Sisters, that It may reign for ever in yours as your Sovereign Lord and Spouse."†

\* It is not without significance that the day on which Father de La Colombière consecrated himself to the Sacred Heart, as also this on which the fire of the Devotion spread through the Community of Paray, should have been the Feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, distinguished, as St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi tells us, for his burning, though hidden love, of the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word.

† Margaret Mary gave expression to her sense of joy and gratitude to Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures in the following note, which she wrote to her: "It is in obedience to the adorable Heart of Jesus, my dear Sister, that I congratulate you on your happiness in having been chosen to render this service to the Heart of our good Master by the courage you have shown in being the first to procure Its being loved, honoured, and known where it seemed impossible for It to gain access. He wishes to have the love and homage of His creatures from a free and loving will, without constraint or dissimulation. And it seems to me that the great desire our Lord has that His Sacred Heart should be honoured by a special worship is in order to renew in souls the effects of His Redemption, by making His divine Heart, as it were anew, Mediator between God and men, whose sins are so multiplied that it requires the whole extent of Its power to obtain mercy for them and the graces of salvation and sanctification, which It desires so

So entirely had our Lord established His reign in the heart of Blessed Margaret Mary herself, that, like His holy Precursor, she thought only of His glory, losing in the thought of it all thought of herself. "This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."\* Such is almost precisely the expression she gives to her own sentiments. "I shall die happy," she writes to the Mother Greyfié, "now that the Sacred Heart of my Saviour begins to be known and myself unknown; for it seems to me that I am now, by His mercy, almost annihilated in point of esteem and reputation in the minds of others. This gives me greater consolation than I can express."

Though Margaret Mary had already attained to such perfection in her actions, she could not rest satisfied without binding herself expressly by vow to do whatever she judged to be most perfect. She had considered seriously for some time this important step, and she had for several years practised the substance of this vow with as great fidelity as if she were really bound by it. The effect of the calumnies and persecution with which she had been assailed seems to have

earnestly to impart to them in abundance, and especially to our Institute, which has so great a need of this succour that I think it is one of the most efficacious means for raising it from its falls, and for providing, as it were, an impregnable fortress against the assaults which the enemy is constantly making upon it, in order to overthrow it by a foreign spirit of pride and ambition, which he wishes to introduce in place of that of humility and simplicity, which is the foundation of the whole building. I acknowledge to you that it seems to me that it is our holy Founder who earnestly desires the introduction of this Devotion into his Institute, because he knows well the effects it is capable of producing. I address these few words to you as my dear friend in the Sacred Heart."

\* St. John iii. 29, 30.



been to strengthen her fidelity and to attach her more closely to the Cross, and she chose this time for finally binding herself by her vow, which she did on the last day of October, 1686. It had been approved of by her Director, Father Rolin, in a letter which he had written to her shortly before his leaving Paray, whence he was recalled by his Superiors, September 18th, 1686.

"I approve," he wrote, "of your making the vow you spoke of, at the end of the Retreat which you are shortly to make. Should you find afterwards that it is the occasion of any trouble to you, it will be no longer binding on you—you will be entirely released from it. Either I myself, or whoever else holds my place with regard to you, will have full power to explain the vow whenever any difficulties arise regarding it, or even to dispense you from it, if it be thought well for the greater glory of God."

A copy of the vow has been preserved written in her own hand. "The following is a vow," she says, "which I have felt urged for some time to make, but to which I did not wish to bind myself except with the advice of my Director and my Mother Superior.

"A vow made on the eve of All Saints, 1686, in order to bind, sacrifice, and consecrate myself more entirely, absolutely, and perfectly to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The first article comprises in substance what is expressed in detail in the following sixteen articles: "O my only Love, I will endeavour to hold in subjection and submission to Thee all that is within me, doing what I believe to be most perfect or most glorious to Thy Sacred Heart, from Which I promise

to withhold nothing in my power, and not to refuse to do or suffer anything in order to make It known, loved, and glorified."

\*As Margaret Mary thought of the multitude of different points to which this vow engaged her, she was inclined to feel a great dread lest she might fail in them. But our Lord Himself reassured her. He told her that she would find in the love of His Sacred Heart a secret power, which would remind her of her engagements, give her strength to execute them, supply for her deficiencies, and punish her with remorse if she failed. "What do you fear," were the words she heard addressed to her in the bottom of her heart, "since I have given Myself security for you? The unity of My pure love will serve to keep you attentive amidst the multiplicity of all these things. I promise you that it shall repair the faults you may commit, and it will itself punish you for them."

"These words," she says, "impressed me with so great a confidence and assurance that such would be the case that, in spite of my great frailty, I no longer fear anything, having placed all my confidence in Him Who can do all things, and from Whom I hope for all and nothing from myself."

She had been prepared for this generous act of love by being placed in a special manner under the protection of the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi. On the day of his Feast, Oct. 4, 1686, she beheld the Saint clothed in ineffable splendour, and raised, as it were, in dignity and glory above the rest of the Saints, in consequence of his conformity with the suffering life of our Lord, and the singular love he bore to the mystery

of His Passion. It was this, she was given to understand, which had urged our Divine Lord to bestow upon him the impression of His sacred Wounds, and had rendered him a singular favourite of His Sacred Heart. He possessed, in consequence, great power in applying the merits of His precious Blood, especially in behalf of sinners, and of appeasing the offended justice of God. He used his power especially in favour of Religious who had fallen from their first fervour, and he constantly pleaded for them. "After having shown me all these things," says Margaret Mary, "the Divine Spouse of my soul gave him to me to be my guide, as a mark of His divine love, that he might guide me in the pains and sufferings which should come upon me."

Trials still awaited Margaret Mary, if they could be called trials which had the power only of affecting her, as it were, exteriorly, and could not disturb the profound and unbroken peace of her soul. What was the tranquillity of soul which she enjoyed we may judge from the marvellous subject of scruple which made it necessary for her Director, Father Rolin, to assure her, in his parting letter, from which we have already quoted: "You are not to consider that it is a sign of your being in any way hardened that you experience that peace which our Lord allows you to enjoy in your crosses." And again: "It is no mark of reprobation that you feel no movement of joy or sorrow but those which the Holy Spirit, Who guides you, impresses on you."

Our Lord, in the meantime, filled her with consolation at seeing the wonderful spread of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart through the Community. The exterior practice of the Devotion was publicly recog-

nised, and served as an evidence of its final triumph. Thus, upon Margaret Mary's quitting her office of Mistress of Novices, which she did at the close of the year 1686, several of her Novices, who left the Noviciate at the same time, resolved on carrying with them a little picture of the Sacred Heart, which they had been in the habit, in their Noviceship, of bearing about with them, each in her turn, in order to pay it every mark of honour during the day. This picture they placed in a retired part of the monastery, and there offered their devotions before it. The spot, embellished with such ornaments as their piety suggested, grew gradually into a little oratory or chapel. It is of this that Margaret Mary speaks, in writing in 1688 to the Mother de Saumaise: "This little chapel," she says, "is the first which has been raised in honour of the Sacred Heart. Our dear Sister des Escures has charge of it. It is a little gem, such taste and care is bestowed upon it."\*

\* The little picture brought from the Noviceship gave place later to a larger painting, which Margaret Mary describes in her letter to Mother de Saumaise. It adorns at present the tomb from whence the relics of Blessed Margaret Mary were removed in triumph, July 13, 1864. This painting was lost sight of during the Revolution, and was restored to the Monastery of Paray in 1833. It may be interesting to notice the subject. In the centre is the Sacred Heart of our Lord, encircled by rays and a crown of thorns. Above is the Eternal Father, Who holds in one hand the globe, and with the other unfolds a scroll bearing the words: "This is the Heart of My well-beloved Son, in Which I am well pleased." The Holy Ghost hovers in the form of a dove above the Sacred Heart. Below, on the right, kneels our Blessed Lady, who points to the Sacred Heart, with the words: "Love It and It will love you." St. Joseph, holding in one hand the lily, points with the other to the Sacred Heart, saying: "Come, It is open to all." A figure below, in attitude of supplication, and expressive of confidence, utters the words: "I love It, and give myself to It."

The triumph of the Sacred Heart crowned her joy in a more special manner when, on the 7th of September, 1688, the chapel which had been raised to Its honour within the enclosure by the pious care of the Mother Melin, was blessed with unusual solemnity. A body of the Clergy attached, as members of a Confraternity, to the parish church, to the number of five-and-twenty, accompanied by the Curés of the neighbouring parishes, came in procession, and with them were admitted also within the enclosure of the monastery a large number of persons, whom it was found difficult to keep out.

During the two hours that the ceremony lasted, and for an hour afterwards, Blessed Margaret Mary remained kneeling in the chapel, wholly absorbed in God, and motionless. Who shall say what passed in her soul during this time? In part, at least, it may find fitting expression, as her contemporaries remark, in the words in which, as we have seen, she opened the secret of her heart a short time before to the Mother Greyfié: "I shall die happy now that the Heart of my Saviour begins to be known."

## CHAPTER XXV.

1678—1690.

WHILST Margaret Mary was securing by her sufferings the final triumph of the Sacred Heart in the Monastery of Paray, she had enkindled and kept alive the fire of the Devotion in several other monasteries of the Order. Her two late Superiors, the Mothers de Saumaise and Greyfié, had carried with them the sacred fire to their respective Monasteries of Moulins and Semur, over which they were called to preside, and it was by the intimate correspondence which Margaret Mary entertained with them that she fanned the flame and spread it still wider, and communicated it to the hearts of many more, both in these and other Communities. It is in these letters of Margaret Mary, in which she lays open the secret depths of her heart, and which she therefore always begged might be destroyed, that we discover as it were in its source that divine fire which burnt in her soul, and would gladly have communicated itself to the whole world. Thanks to the wise discretion which Mother de Saumaise allowed herself to exercise in complying with Margaret Mary's wishes, we are still in possession of a large number of letters addressed to her first Mother Superior. The Mother Greyfié took Margaret Mary more strictly at her word, and hence we are obliged to be satisfied with the more scanty

remains which have been preserved of her correspondence with one towards whom she always retained so sincere an affection and regard. In the correspondence with both we recognise the humility and submission of the child, combined with the zeal, frankness, and divine love of the Apostle and Disciple of the Sacred Heart.

Mother de Saumaise, on quitting Paray in 1678, had returned to her own Monastery of Dijon. She was there appointed Mistress of Novices; but at the end of a year she was chosen Mother Superior of the Monastery of Moulins. Owing, however, to the delicacy of her health, she was recalled at the end of her three years' Superiority to her own monastery in 1682. This had been already foretold to her by Margaret Mary. "It is true," she wrote to her in May, 1679, the period of her appointment, "that our Lord has covered your cross with roses, for fear you might shrink from it. It is not this, however, that should give you joy so much as the thorns which are hidden beneath. When they begin to make themselves felt, it will be then that our Lord will take complacency in you, by giving you a resemblance to Himself, and allowing you to see that He is no less admirable in the bitterness of Calvary than in the sweetness of Thabor." This cross was the burden of Superiority, rendered heavier by habitual infirmities; the roses were the consolation Mother de Saumaise experienced in being the inmate of a House consecrated, as it were, by being the scene of the death of her holy Foundress, and which, after Annecy, retained some of the most cherished traditions for a Daughter of the Visitation. As Mother de Saumaise was destined by our Lord to plant the Devotion to

His Sacred Heart in the Community of Moulins, perhaps it was necessary that such fruit should have drawn its first strength from the Cross.

Mother de Saumaise had been the first to commence the correspondence with Margaret Mary soon after her return to Dijon from Paray, unwilling to allow of silence on the part of her former Daughter, who had hitherto made her the depositary of the most intimate secrets of her heart. Margaret Mary assures her in return that our Lord had so closely united their hearts that there was no fear they would be ever separated. "And as I have no terms to express to you," she says, "the gratitude I feel for all your goodness to me as a Mother, it is enough for me to tell you that I shall retain an everlasting remembrance of it in the presence of our Lord."

Mother de Saumaise, on entering on her charge at Moulins, was not long in communicating to her Community the sentiments she entertained herself towards her former Daughter. Sister Louise Henriette de Soudeilles, the Mistress of Novices, was one of the first to challenge the favour of correspondence with Margaret Mary, and to request to be allowed to enter with her into a mutual participation of spiritual goods. Margaret Mary, in reply, after expressing her sense of the favour she esteemed it to be thus remembered by her, assures her that the only good she possesses is in the Sacred Heart of our Lord, which God has given in His goodness as the treasure of the poor, out of the riches of which they may satisfy their indigence. "It is in this rich treasure that we must share," she says, "by placing in the Sacred Heart all the good we are



able to do by His grace, and taking His in exchange to offer to the Eternal Father in place of our own." "It is here, my dear Sister," she continues, "that we must form our partnership and make our retreat. In the Sacred Heart we shall live sheltered from every storm, and in It we will meet and make each others acquaintance." We shall see how intimately they were united in the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and how this union tended to promote the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Margaret Mary was enabled from her own experience to encourage Mother de Saumaise amidst the difficulties which she knew would attend her endeavours to promote the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. "Do not be surprised, my dear Mother," she writes, "at all the contradictions you will meet with in establishing the reign of this loving Heart. I entreat of you with all the affection of my heart not to desist from this holy enterprise."

Mother de Saumaise had already succeeded in sowing the seeds of the Devotion at Moulins, when she was recalled, as we have said, at the end of three years, in the summer of 1678, to her own Monastery of Dijon. She handed over her charge, together with the agreeable task of promoting the Devotion, to Mother Louise Henriette de Soudeilles. Mother de Soudeilles wrote shortly after her election to Margaret Mary, who replied to her with great frankness, and took occasion to turn her thoughts to the Sacred Heart under the burden of her new charge. "It is true, my dear Mother," she writes, "that your obligation is very great; the weight of it can be lightened only by Him Who has promised to make His burden light." "The title of

Mother Superior," she says, "seems to me to represent nothing else than a living image of Jesus Christ. When He raises any one to this dignity, He would have them divest themselves of all self-interest, regarding in everything only His greater glory, loving only with the love of His Sacred Heart, acting only in His spirit, allowing Him to live, reign, and act Himself." Checking herself, however, "Pardon me, my dear Mother," she says, "for my too great liberty. It is the fear of this, indeed, which always makes me most disinclined to write." It would seem, indeed, that Mother de Soudeilles had been thrown into some uneasiness in consequence of counsels given her by Margaret Mary in some of her letters. For, writing to her in November, 1682, Margaret Mary begs of her to take no notice of what she had written to her. "For I put down," she says, "without thought or consideration, whatever comes into my mind. Give yourself no more trouble about it, my dear Mother; I assure you that our Lord is satisfied with the goodwill of your heart." Margaret Mary's explanation had the effect she desired, for we find her writing later—"I am extremely confused that your charity should find consolation in our letters. It is our Lord Himself Who gives it you."

At Dijon, whither, as we have seen, Mother de Saumaise returned in July, 1682, the venerated Mother Superior, Mother Anne Séraphine Boulier,\* dying in September was succeeded by the Mother Mary Dorothy

\* It was Mother Ann Séraphine Boulier, it will be remembered, who was consulted by Mother de Saumaise, and assured by her of the divine character of the extraordinary graces received by Margaret Mary at the beginning of her religious life.

Desbarres. Margaret Mary continued to urge strongly upon Mother de Saumaise at Dijon, as at Moulins, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. "It seems to me, my dear Mother," she writes to her in August, 1684, "that you would greatly please the Sacred Heart of our Lord by making an entire sacrifice of your heart to Him on some Friday after Holy Communion, in order to testify to Him that you no longer wish to make any use of it except for His pure love by procuring Him all the honour and glory in your power. I say no more to you about it because I think you have already done so; but it will give Him singular pleasure if you frequently renew it, and practise it faithfully in order to complete your crown. If you only knew what merit and glory there is in honouring the amiable Heart of the adorable Jesus, and what a recompense He will give to those who consecrate themselves to It and seek to honour It! It seems to me that this single intention will give more merit to their actions in the sight of God than all else they could do without it."

She urges a similar consecration of herself upon Mother de Soudeilles, and expresses to her the idea she has formed of the perfection which the Sacred Heart expects of her; that she should will nothing except with Its will, love nothing except with Its affections, do nothing except with the light It gives her, and undertake nothing without first asking counsel and support from It; giving It the glory of all, returning It thanks in the ill as well as the good success of her undertakings, remaining always contented without troubling herself about anything.

The Mother Greyfié, on quitting Paray at the

end of her six years' Superiority, in May, 1684, was elected, as we have mentioned, Mother Superior of the Monastery of Semur, near Auxerre. It was on her arrival here that Margaret Mary soon opened an intimate correspondence with her. Enough of this correspondence remains to show how ardently Margaret Mary pressed upon her late Mother Superior the claims of the Sacred Heart, and the efficacy of her appeals. "If you only knew, my good Mother," she wrote to her in 1685, "how strongly urged I feel to love the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ! It seems to me that I live but for this." She then communicates to her, as we have already seen, the promises made by our Blessed Lord in favour of those who practise the Devotion to His Sacred Heart. What an effect was produced on the Mother Greyfié by this letter, together with the intelligence of the recent inauguration of the Devotion by the Novices on the Feast of St. Margaret, we have already had occasion to notice. The Devotion was taken up at once by the Community of Semur. The erection of an oratory adorned with a painting of the Sacred Heart, and the public celebration of the day appointed by our Lord for the Feast, served to show the alacrity with which they gave themselves up to it. The miniature of the Sacred Heart sent by the Mother Greyfié to Margaret Mary, and her present of pictures to the Novices, testified her cordial sympathy. All combined to give the greatest joy to Margaret Mary. "I cannot tell you the consolation you have given me," she writes, "both in sending me the painting of the Sacred Heart, and also in being so willing to honour It with all your Community."

Perhaps it was the communication of these same promises by Margaret Mary to Mother de Saumaise, and the account of the blessings attached to the representation of the Sacred Heart, that inspired her also with the desire of having a painting of the Sacred Heart executed. On her making known this desire to Margaret Mary, she not only encouraged her in it, but urged her also to have a plate executed which might serve for an engraving of the Sacred Heart, so that copies might be multiplied, and those who wished to honour the Sacred Heart might have an opportunity of placing the picture in their houses, or wearing it in a smaller form about them. She tells her that she thinks our Lord designs her to be the first to procure Him this honour, "For you were the first," she says, "to whom it was His will that I should make known the ardent desire He had of being known, loved, and glorified by His creatures." "It seems to me," she adds, "that you would receive a richer recompense for this than for anything you have ever done in your life."\*

\* What importance Blessed Margaret Mary attached to the circulation of pictures of the Sacred Heart we may judge from the earnestness with which she recurs to the subject in her letters, and from the manner in which she expresses herself on the subject. One of the Fathers of the Society had undertaken to get the above-mentioned plate made, but was prevented, by being employed by the Bishop of Autun in labouring for the conversion of the Calvinists in Paray. Margaret Mary, in writing to Mother de Saumaise, tells her that she has reason to think that if the good Father had first executed what he had promised to the Sacred Heart, he would have converted and changed the hearts of the Calvinists, so greatly would the Sacred Heart have been pleased with what he had done; but that, since he has given the preference to something else, even though to His glory, his labours will not be attended with much fruit.

In this same letter she communicates to Mother de Saumaise the instruction which she had received from her holy Founder on the day of his Feast (Jan. 29, 1686), of which we have already spoken, regarding the importance of this Devotion to the security and well-being of his Order. She makes the same communication to the Mother Greyfié at the close of June, 1686, at the same time that she communicates to her her joy at the marvellous change in the Community of Paray, and the triumph of the Devotion on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of that year. Our Lord wishes her, she says, in praying for the Community of Semur, to speak of it no otherwise than as the well-beloved Community of His Heart. He takes such pleasure, she adds, in the honour He receives from it that it makes Him forget all the bitterness He finds elsewhere.\*

We have an opportunity of observing, in a letter which Margaret Mary wrote about this time to Mother de Soudeilles, the manner in which she introduces the subject of the Devotion to one who apparently as yet was but imperfectly acquainted with its distinctive character.

\* Margaret Mary recommends to the Mother Greyfié, as a practice of the Devotion, the allotment of certain offices among the Community, such as that of Mediatrix, Reparatrix, &c. In this we recognise the first suggestion of what has since become a familiar practice of devotion to the Sacred Heart. The Mediatrix was to beg of the Eternal Father that the Sacred Heart might be better known, of the Holy Ghost that It might be more loved, and of the Blessed Virgin that she would employ her credit in order that all who addressed themselves to It might experience Its power. The Reparatrix was to beg pardon of God for all the injuries done to the Sacred Heart in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

"I do not know, my dear Mother," she says, "whether you understand what the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ is, about which I spoke to you, and which produces great fruit, and a striking change in all who consecrate and give themselves to it with fervour. I desire ardently that your Community should be among these." "We have found this Devotion," she remarks, with her characteristic modesty, "in the book of the Retreat of Father de La Colombière, who is venerated as a Saint. I do not know if you are acquainted with it; it would give me great pleasure to send you a copy of it."

A few months later accordingly, Margaret Mary sent her a copy of the book, together with two pictures of the Sacred Heart, the larger one, she tells her, to be placed at the foot of her crucifix or elsewhere, in order to pay it honour, the smaller one to wear near her heart.\* She sends her also an act of consecration to the Sacred Heart. "I do this," she says, "because I

\* This interesting miniature, a fac-simile of which had been sent to Mother de Saumaise, is in the keeping of the Monastery of Nevers, which has inherited the traditions and pious relics of the Monastery of Moulins. In the centre is the Sacred Heart encircled with jets of flame, pierced with three nails, and surmounted by the Cross. In the open Wound of the Sacred Heart is read the word "Charitas" in letters of gold. Encircling the Sacred Heart are two crowns, the inner one formed of interlacing knots, called, in the language of the time, *lacs d'amour*, the outer one a crown of thorns. Hearts are represented entangled, as it were, severally in these two encircling crowns. "Those within the crown of thorns around the Sacred Heart," is Margaret Mary's own description to Mother de Soudeilles, "are hearts which love and follow It by suffering, those in the knots (*lacs d'amour*) are such as love It with a love of joy."

think that this Divine Heart wishes to be absolute Master of yours in order that you may procure It to be honoured, loved, and glorified in your Community."

"You cannot think," she says, "what good effects this Devotion produces in souls which have the happiness of being acquainted with It, through the means of that holy man, Father de La Colombière, who was himself wholly consecrated to the Sacred Heart, and lived only to procure Its being loved, honoured, and glorified. It was this, I think, which raised him to such a height of perfection in so short a time."

Amongst those whom the Devotion to the Sacred Heart had inspired with fervour in its cause was Sister Jane Magdalen Joly, of the Monastery of Dijon. She felt a great desire to compose a little work, with a view to promote the Devotion. On her communicating this desire to Margaret Mary, "Your letter, my dear Sister," was Margaret Mary's reply, "confirms me still more in regarding you as one of the true friends of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He knows those whom He has destined specially to establish His reign. I think that you are of the number."\*

Sister Jane Magdalen Joly was employed in promoting the Devotion not only by writing. The drawing, which had been so long looked for as a preparation for the plate and engraving of the Sacred Heart, proving unsatisfactory, Sister Jane Magdalen was desired, in

\* The publication of the little work by Sister Jane Magdalen Joly at Dijon suggested to Mother de Soudeilles to publish, a few months later, a somewhat similar work at Moulins. It contained some account of the origin of the Devotion, some of the details of which occasioned Margaret Mary, according to her own expression, "terrible confusion."



1687, by her Mother Superior, Mother Mary Dorothy Desbarres, to prepare a drawing according to the suggestions of Blessed Margaret Mary. The good Sister obeyed with simplicity, and, though she had never had any instruction in drawing, the attempt was so successful that the artist to whom it was sent found nothing to correct in it. "I cannot express to you my joy," writes Margaret Mary, to whom the sketch had been sent, "on receiving your drawing, which is just what I wished. The consolation I feel at the ardour you manifest in the service of the Sacred Heart is beyond all expression."

"I believe," says Margaret Mary, writing of this good Sister in the following year to Mother de Saumaise, "that she has given more pleasure to our Lord by what she has done in His honour than by anything she ever did in all her life, and I think the Sacred Heart will make her an everlasting memorial of His mercies."

Notwithstanding the repugnance Margaret Mary felt to writing she could not refuse to comply with the desire of Sister Félice Madeleine de La Barge, of the Community of Moulins, to enter into a correspondence based on the strong devotion she entertained to the Sacred Heart. "You could not, my dear Sister," writes Margaret Mary, in 1686, "engage me to a closer union with your charity than by loving the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ." In her letters to Sister de La Barge, Margaret Mary treats her much as she might treat one of her own Novices, and hence we are presented in the correspondence with most valuable spiritual instruction.

She tells her that our Lord wishes to establish His reign in her heart by first banishing all creatures from

it, and then herself. To this end she recommends her to rejoice on any occasion when she is overlooked or despised, yet not to seek such occasions nor refuse them, but to profit by them ; to unite herself to the intentions of the Sacred Heart, to love with Its love and will with Its will, and to choose It for her oratory wherein to offer up her prayers. She tells her that our Lord specially looks for self-abandonment and confidence from her. "Think often," she says, "that a child cannot perish in the hands of an all-powerful Father."

"You should put away far from you," she tells her again, "all trouble and uneasiness, for our Lord does not make His abode, except in peace, in a soul which desires to see itself destroyed and annihilated in order to remain lost, as it were, in the love of its own abjection."

Sister de La Barge had asked her to which of the mysteries in the Passion of our Lord she felt most attraction. She tells her that it is the Crucifixion, and that she took a pleasure in standing at the foot of the Cross with the Blessed Virgin, in order to unite herself to all that our dear Lord had done for us. "But in fine, my dear friend," she says, "we must always take our place in His adorable Heart and never quit It, happen what may. It is a strong and secure place of refuge."

"As regards entering into His Sacred Heart, go ; what have you to fear, since He Himself invites you to enter and to take your repose there ? Is It not the throne of mercy, at which the most wretched are the best received, provided love presents them in the abyss

of their misery? If we are pusillanimous, cold, imperfect, is It not a burning furnace, in which we can perfect and purify ourselves like gold in the crucible, to become a loving sacrifice, immolated and sacrificed to His adorable designs? Abandon yourself without reserve to His loving providence. Leave yourself, and you will find all. Forget yourself, and He will think of you. Lose yourself in the abyss of your own nothingness, and you will possess Him. But what is to enable you to do all this? The love that you will find in the Sacred Heart, in Which you must not only endeavour to make your retreat, but you must also take It as your guide and principal director, in order that He may teach you what He wishes of you, and give you strength to accomplish it perfectly."

Margaret Mary continued to encourage Mother de Saumaise in her endeavours to promote the Devotion. "It seems to me," she says, "that He finds His delight in your Community, and is ready to shed upon it the profusion of His love with an abundance of saving and sanctifying graces." She communicates to her also two consoling assurances she had received in her favour. She had recommended her, together with her Mother Superior, Mary Dorothy Desbarres, and her Confessor, M. Charollais, to the Sacred Heart of our Lord at Holy Communion. She heard in reply, she says, the following words: "Yes, I receive them for ever in the unity of My love." Another time, our Lord showed her, she says, that He would make a crown of twelve of His best-beloved who had procured Him the greatest glory upon earth, and that He would place them as twelve stars around His Sacred Heart. "It seems to

me," she says, "that the same three were of this happy number."

A few months later, she communicates to her a remarkable Vision with which she had been recently favoured, on the Feast of the Visitation, July 2nd, 1688, and by which she was given to understand the intimate connection of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart with the spirit of the Order, the mission of the Daughters of the Visitation to communicate it to all, and of the Society of Jesus to make its value known.

She had been allowed to pass the whole day before the Blessed Sacrament. She beheld the Sacred Heart of our Lord as on a throne of flames. From the Wound in It issued such bright and burning rays that the whole place seemed lighted and warmed with them. The Blessed Virgin was on one side, and on the other St. Francis of Sales and Father de La Colombière. The Daughters of the Visitation seemed to be there, their Angel Guardians by their side. The Blessed Virgin invited her Daughters to approach, for that she wished to make them depositaries of a precious treasure. "Behold," she said, pointing to the Sacred Heart, "the divine treasure which is especially manifested to you through the tender love which my Son has for your Institute." "You are not to enrich yourselves only," she added, "with this inexhaustible treasure, but you are to distribute it freely, endeavouring to enrich all with it, without fear of its failing, for the more you take the more will there still be to take."

"And you too, faithful servant of my Son," she said, turning to Father de La Colombière, "you have a large share in this precious treasure; for if it is given

to the Daughters of the Visitation to make it known and loved, it is reserved to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus to make known its utility and value, in order that all may profit by it, receiving it with the respect and gratitude due to so great a benefit. And in proportion as they shall do this, the Divine Heart will shed Its blessings and graces in such abundance on the functions of their ministry that they will produce fruit beyond their labours and their hopes, and, at the same time, in particular for their own salvation and perfection."

St. Francis of Sales then invited his Daughters to come and draw the waters of salvation from that source from whence their Constitutions themselves had taken their rise. "It is in this Divine Heart," he said, "that you will find a means of acquitting yourselves perfectly of what is enjoined you in the first article of your Directory, which contains in substance the whole perfection of your Institute—'Let the object of their whole life, and of all their exercises, be to unite themselves with God.'

"To attain this, the Sacred Heart must be the life which animates us, and the love of It our constant exercise; for this alone can unite us to God in order to aid the holy Church by our prayers and good example, and to advance the salvation of our neighbour."

To the same effect is what she writes to Mother de Saumaise on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1689. "Our Lord showed me," she says, "the Devotion to the Sacred Heart as a beautiful tree, which He had destined from all eternity to take root in our Institute

and to spread its branches through all its Houses, in order that each might gather its fruits according to their will and taste. These fruits are to renew in us the primitive spirit of our vocation."

"Our good Father de La Colombière," she adds, "has procured that the holy Society of Jesus shall be favoured after our Institute with all the graces and special privileges of the Sacred Heart of our Lord. He promises that He will shed His blessings in abundance and profusion on their labours of holy charity in which they are engaged for the salvation of souls. This Divine Heart, it seems to me, has so ardent a desire to be known, loved, and adored, especially by these good Fathers, that He promises them, if I am not mistaken, so to shed the unction of His ardent charity on their words, with such strong and powerful graces, that they will be like two-edged swords to penetrate the hardest hearts of the most obdurate sinners. But to this end, they must endeavour to draw all their lights from this inexhaustible source of the science and charity of the Saints."

Writing to Mother de Saumaise, shortly after the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, 1688, she recalls the memory of the singular favour she had received on the same Feast in 1674, of which mention has been already made. "I thought I should melt, as it were, with shame and confusion," she says, "when on the day of the Feast of the Beloved Disciple of our Beloved, I called to mind how on this same day the Divine Spouse conferred upon me the incomprehensible grace of allowing me to repose upon His Heart with His Beloved Disciple, and giving me His Heart."

The Mother Marie Félice Dubuysson had succeeded Mother Louise Henriette de Soudeilles, in August, 1688, as Mother Superior of Moulins. Margaret Mary, in writing to Moulins at the time, had presented her affectionate respects to the new Mother Superior, who on her part gladly availed herself of the opportunity to enter upon a correspondence which she valued so highly, and Margaret Mary, in spite of her general repugnance to writing, could not refuse this new appeal, and did not fail, as opportunity offered, to urge the claims of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. "Spare no pains," she writes to Mother Dubuysson, "to procure Its being loved, honoured, and glorified, for this is the most effectual means of gaining His friendship and drawing down upon yourself and all your Community the abundance of His sanctifying graces and the reign of His ardent charity, the unction of which He will shed upon your hearts by the purity of His holy love." The Mother Dubuysson having asked her for a prayer which she might use to testify her love to the Sacred Heart, "For my part," replies Margaret Mary, "I know no better than this very love itself, for where there is love all is eloquent, and even the greatest occupations are proofs of our love."

In March, 1687, Margaret Mary had written to Mother de Saumaise, expressing her sympathy with the petition which had been addressed to Rome from Dijon to obtain approbation for the Feast, the Mass, and the Office of the Sacred Heart. The answer returned from Rome was, that the Devotion should first be publicly established in the diocese with the approbation of the Ordinary, and that when it had

existed there for some time, then the necessary sanction might be obtained for its confirmation. This answer, which might be regarded in one sense as an approbation, was felt as a severe disappointment by the ardent friends of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Margaret Mary, though she felt it deeply herself, wrote to Mother de Saumaise, in August, 1688, to console her, and expressed to her what it was that had enabled her to bear the intelligence herself, which, as she said, had pierced her heart like a sword. "As I prostrated myself," she said, "before a picture of the Sacred Heart to make my complaint, I received the following reply—'Why do you grieve at an event which will turn to My greater glory? At present, men are led to love and honour Me without any other support than love itself, and this greatly pleases Me. But this ardour may grow cool; and this My Divine Heart would feel most deeply, for being pure love It could not bear it. Then will I rekindle this fire in all hearts by means of these and still greater privileges, nor will I leave unrecompensed the pains that are taken to that end. Remain, then, in peace.'" "This," she says, "is what I have done since."

Margaret Mary, in the meantime, expresses to the different Sisters with whom she is in correspondence the joy which she feels at the rapid progress which the Devotion is making in different directions.

"It is a great pleasure," she wrote to Mother de Saumaise, in 1688, "to see the progress the Devotion to the Sacred Heart is making here. It is, my dear Mother, through your means. Do not, then, be discouraged, for it seems to me that He wishes you to



make it your only business, for it is this principally which will form your crown."

She writes to Sister de La Barge, in 1689, and acquaints her with the eagerness with which the Devotion was taken up at Lyons. She had sent one of the books published at Dijon to a friend at Lyons. She had shown it to a young Father of the Society\* in that city. His scholars, on his showing it them, finding that they could not multiply the written copies sufficiently to satisfy their wishes, determined on having it printed at their own expense. A well-known publisher of Lyons, on being applied to to get it printed, was himself so much struck with the Devotion that he insisted on undertaking the publication free of expense. Father Croiset was asked to make some additions to the little work, which he did; and no sooner was it in print than the first edition was soon exhausted, and within two months even a third was called for.

Writing to Sister Jane Magdalen Joly, at Dijon, "You cannot believe," writes Margaret Mary, "how the Devotion increases, and spreads graces and blessings on every side. There are Curés in the villages who have established it in their parishes as soon as they became acquainted with it; and even persons of great piety and learning, after being strongly opposed to it, preach it in public, and show that nothing is more salutary or holy."

"You never saw anything like the ardour," she writes, a little later, to Mother de Saumaise, "with which the Devotion spreads through the hearts of men."

\* Perhaps Father John Croiset, S.J., who was at this time Professor at the College of the Society in Lyons.

She describes to Mother Dubuysson, in October, 1689, the progress which the Devotion is making at Marseilles. Here more than a thousand copies of the book printed at Lyons had been sold; and of the twenty-seven Religious Houses in the city, there is not one, she says, that has not received the Devotion with enthusiasm. The same little book, she tells her, had found its way into Poland, through the means of the Mother Superior of Lyons, and it was also on the point of being translated into Italian.

The date of the last letter written by Blessed Margaret Mary to her Sisters, or of the last at least to which a certain date can be assigned, was the 27th of May, 1690. In this letter, addressed to Sister de La Barge, at Moulins, she consents to write to her once a year, in spite of the determination she had previously expressed to cease writing altogether. She gives her the following concluding counsel—to have recourse in all things to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and to endeavour to maintain the closest union with It.

“As regards the trouble you feel,” she says again, “in leading a languishing life in the service of God, what He seems to suggest to me to say to you is, that you should not make yourself uneasy, but, in order to satisfy Him in this respect, all you have to do is to unite yourself in all your actions to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, at the beginning to animate your intention and at the end to satisfy for your defects. For example, if you find you cannot pray as you would wish, be satisfied with offering the prayer which our Lord is offering for us in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and

present His ardent prayer to satisfy for your tepidity. Say in each of your actions: 'My God, I wish to do or suffer this in the Sacred Heart of Thy Divine Son, and according to His holy intentions, which I offer to Thee in reparation for all that is faulty or imperfect in mine,' and so of the rest. When you meet with any trouble, affliction, or mortification, say to yourself: 'I will take what the Sacred Heart of our Lord sends me in order to unite me more closely to Him.' Endeavour especially to preserve peace of heart; the way to secure this is no longer to have any will, but to take that of the Sacred Heart in place of our own. In a word, this loving Heart will supply for all that is wanting on your part, for It will love God for you, and you will love Him in It and by It."

It was thus that Blessed Margaret Mary endeavoured to enkindle and keep alive the fire of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart in the several monasteries with which she was in correspondence. During the few remaining months which ushered in her death she was to lead in silence a life truly "hidden with Christ in God." All desires were now, as it were, extinct in her soul; she enjoyed a profound peace, which was even capable, from its very depth, of creating a scruple within her. "I acknowledge to you," is her avowal to her former Director, Father Rolin, in her last letter to him, "that I can no longer wish or desire anything in this world, though I see clearly that, in point of virtue, all is wanting to me. I should wish sometimes to grieve for this, but I cannot, for it is no longer in my power, so to say, to act. I feel only a perfect acquiescence in the good pleasure of God, and an ineffable pleasure in

suffering. The thought that consoles me from time to time is that the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ will do all for me if I allow It; It will will, love, and desire for me, and will supply for all my defects."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1687—1690.

AMONGST the letters written by Margaret Mary in furtherance of the claims of the Sacred Heart, we find several addressed to her two brothers, Chrysostom and James. They alone remained alive, of the various members of her family, to claim that natural affection which was so strong within her, and which her Religious Profession had served to raise to the higher order of divine charity. Her mother had died in 1676, five years after her entrance into Paray on the 25th of May, 1671. Chrysostom and James strengthened the bond of family ties by a mutual regard ; and whilst Chrysostom, who had followed his father's profession of the law, became perpetual Mayor of Bois-Sainte-Marie, James, who was called to the ecclesiastical life, was Curé of the same place. They both entertained great veneration and regard for their sister, and experienced in return the happy influence of her counsels and example. Hence they were led to embrace with ardour the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and combined, as we shall see, to found a chapel at Bois-Sainte-Marie dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

A severe illness, with which her brother the Curé was attacked in 1687, presented Margaret Mary with an opportunity of manifesting her influence with the

Sacred Heart of our Lord in his favour, and through the assistance she rendered him in his temporal health, of inspiring him with a devotion to the Sacred Heart. He had been suddenly struck with an attack of apoplexy; all the resources of medical men had been exhausted in vain, and the doctors declared the case desperate. Chrysostom, however, had confidence in his holy sister, and sent to beg the aid of her prayers. Margaret Mary wished that the cure should come from the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and begged of Him to act as the Physician Himself. She gave the bearer of the message three billets, on each of which she had written a short invocation to the Sacred Heart, desiring that her brother should be given water to drink in which these billets had been dipped.\* Her brother had no sooner taken a spoonful of the water than he was at once cured, and the doctors were greatly surprised on revisiting him to find him in perfect health.

Blessed Margaret Mary availed herself of the opportunity to instil the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, to which her brother felt already that he owed so much, and urged upon him some counsels which would lead him more effectually to adopt it.

"It is a great consolation, my dear brother," she writes to him on the 22nd of January, 1687, "that the

\* Margaret Mary writes to Mother de Saumaise in 1689: "This loving Heart has a great desire to be known and loved by His creatures. It is on this account that He would have them address themselves to Him with great confidence. Many persons have been cured by the following means: The sick person is given water to drink in which have been dipped five billets, inscribed on one side, "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus cure you," and on the other, "Praised be the most pure and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

goodness of the Sacred Heart of our Lord has been pleased to accede to our wishes, and to allow us to keep you still a little longer here in this place of misery and tears, where we must indeed acknowledge that all is vanity and affliction of spirit, except loving and serving God alone. This I promised Him you would do, if He still allowed you a longer time to live. For you must know, my dear brother, that I have made many promises to the Sacred Heart of our Lord in order to obtain this for you."

She then specifies some points which he should attend to in order to attain that perfection which his state demands, and suggests to him to consecrate himself to the Sacred Heart, in order to give and procure for It all the love, honour, and glory in his power. "I think I have already spoken to you," she adds, "concerning this Devotion, which has been quite recently established. It seems to me that there is not a shorter path for arriving at perfection, or a surer means of salvation, than by being consecrated to this Divine Heart. It is to this, too, that I have engaged you. Love It, then, if you would have me love you, for I can only love what It loves." "Pardon me, my dear brother," she concludes, "for saying all this; it comes from a heart which loves you, and desires ardently that you should be a Saint."

"You have so entirely gained my heart," she writes to him a few months later, "by the manner in which you have opened yours to me, that it seems to me there is nothing I would not do to advance you in the holy love of God."

"I cannot express to you," she continues, "the joy

which I feel at the change which has lately taken place in you, for I think that our Lord is beginning to be pleased with you. I beg of Him with all my heart to accomplish what he has begun in you, and to grant you holy perseverance." "I speak to you, perhaps, too freely," she adds, "but take it as coming from my tender affection for you. I should be less warmly interested in your real good if I loved you less. I cannot act otherwise towards you, for I look upon you as even more than a second self. Remember to aid me with your holy Sacrifices, on which I count greatly. Continue this charity towards me, for on this I found my hope."

Her brother Chrysostom having proposed of his own accord to build a chapel at Bois-Sainte-Marie in honour of the Sacred Heart, Margaret Mary writes to him in 1687—"You could not confer a greater favour on me, my dear brother, than by giving me such happy intelligence regarding the good sentiments the Sacred Heart preserves in your heart. I had not ventured to say anything more to you on the subject, for devotions are never solid unless they come from the movement of divine grace. But you must now execute without fail what you have proposed. By doing this you will be giving me one of the greatest consolations I can receive in this mortal life, for nothing can give me such joy as to see the Sacred Heart of our Lord loved, honoured, and glorified. I hope that my brother the Priest will not refuse to contribute to the best of his power towards a design so greatly to the glory of the Sacred Heart, and one which will draw down upon you and your family many graces."



"You say nothing," she writes shortly after to her brother the Curé, "of the foundation of which my brother spoke to me. You cannot think what pleasure you give me by your zeal for the glory of the Sacred Heart. It is, I think, one of the shortest ways of securing our sanctification."

The urgent appeals of Blessed Margaret Mary were not without effect. The Curé of Bois-Sainte-Marie established permanently in his parish the practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. The chapel was commenced, and the good Priest founded Masses to be said in it, and waited only for the time when he might have an opportunity of offering the Holy Sacrifice himself in the new chapel. Blessed Margaret Mary writes to him to express her joy at all she had heard.\* "I now see that your friendship towards me is genuine, for you give me such proofs as I desired. I see in this, as it seems to me, a strong proof that the Sacred Heart wishes to detach your heart entirely from earthly objects and to make you a Saint. I do not ask you, my dear brother," she says, "to practise great austerities, but

\* Margaret Mary communicated also to Mother de Saumaise the joy she felt on this occasion. "It is my brother the mayor," she writes, "who is building the chapel at Bois-Sainte-Marie, of which I spoke to you. He has also ordered a picture like ours, which he intends to place in it. My brother the Priest is also founding a Mass in perpetuity, to be said on every Friday in the year, and to be sung solemnly every first Friday of the month. I tell you this, in order that you may thank the Sacred Heart, Which has inspired them to do this; for I did not speak to them about it, though I should have been very glad to do so, for I much prefer that it should come from themselves. You cannot believe what a change the Sacred Heart has made in the family. They have assured me that they would be ready to give the last drop of their blood to support and advance this holy Devotion."

a generous mortification of your passions and inclinations ; to detach your heart from earthly things ; to regard God in all that you do, seeking only to please Him and attributing the glory of all to Him, without troubling yourself to acquire any esteem or reputation amongst creatures."

The influence of the prayers of Blessed Margaret Mary, and the truth of her predictions, was experienced in a remarkable manner by her family in the case of Angélique Aumônier, wife of her brother Chrysostom.

Upon her expressing a great desire to visit Blessed Margaret Mary her husband took her with him to Paray. On their admission, however, into the Parlour, Chrysostom was surprised and mortified to find that his wife was silent, appearing unable to speak from her tears. Upon this he quitted the room, leaving her alone with his sister. On his return at the end of half-an-hour he found her more calm, and they both took leave of Margaret Mary together. Finding his wife, however, still silent, Chrysostom returned to his sister, and expressed his regret that his wife should have acted as she had done. "For my part," replied Margaret Mary, "I am well pleased, for these are good tears which she has been shedding." She then told him, under secrecy, that Angélique, on her inquiring from her the cause of her tears, had begged of her to ask of God her salvation, cost what it might. "Have you considered the matter well?" asked Margaret Mary. On her replying in the affirmative, "I will ask of God your salvation," said Margaret Mary, "with as much fervour as I would my own, but God has shown me that it will cost you dear." "No matter," replied

Angélique Aumônier, "I submit myself entirely to the will of God, to do with me as He pleases."

"You must have patience, therefore, both of you," remarked Margaret Mary to her brother, "and beg this grace of God. Her submission and yours, my dear brother, will put an end to all."

Two days after their return to Bois-Sainte-Marie, Angélique Aumônier was seized with a violent pain in the face, so that she could not refrain from crying out from excess of pain. All the medical men of the neighbourhood tried their skill and every remedy in vain. Hearing of a physician in Lyons who had wrought some extraordinary cures, they went to visit him, but he gave up the case, saying that it was beyond the knowledge of doctors. All the most eminent physicians and surgeons of Lyons were called in and held a consultation together. They professed themselves unable to understand the case or to do anything in it. The only reply given by the leading physician present to the surprise expressed by Madame Alacoque was: "Madam, we do not lay claim to more than human power upon earth."

Chrysostom began now to open his eyes to the true solution of the enigma which had perplexed him in his sister's words. He visited several Religious Houses in order to obtain their prayers, and, amongst others, the Monastery of the Visitation of Bellecour, in Lyons, to fulfil a vow which he had made to the heart of St. Francis of Sales. He visited also the College of the Society of Jesus in Lyons. The Superior, Father Billet, was a native of Paray. His niece, Sister Claude Marguerite Billet, had been a Novice of Blessed Mar-

garet Mary, and was favoured by her with special marks of confidence ; his nephew was physician to the Monastery of Paray. Father Croiset, who was at this time residing at this College, frequently visited Madame Alacoque, and the happy influence which he exercised over her was so great that he led her to resign herself with complete submission to the will of God.

On their return to Bois-Sainte-Marie, on Chrysostom sending word to Blessed Margaret Mary, she replied that as soon as she was quite resigned her ills would cease. Angélique Aumônier, on hearing the letter read, made an act of entire resignation to the will of God, and died on the following day. She was buried in the family vault at Bois-Sainte-Marie, beneath the recently-completed chapel of the Sacred Heart.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1687—1690.

MARGARET MARY, on quitting the office of Mistress of Novices at the beginning of 1687, had been again appointed assistant in the Infirmary to Sister Catherine Augustine Marest, and afterwards was again placed in charge of the children, or "Little Sisters." In either position she had abundant opportunity of meeting with that humiliation and mortification which bore a precious value in her eyes from the resemblance it gave her to our Blessed Lord.

She suffered at the same time great pain from gatherings in her fingers, which necessitated severe incisions to the bone.\* Such was the patience with which she bore the treatment, that the surgeon could not refrain from remarking with a smile, that "she bade fair to be a Saint." She was still jealous, however, of the consolation in which she thought nature found its account in the compassion expressed for her. "It cannot be content," she says, writing to the Mother Greyfié, "to suffer without relief amidst humiliation, contempt, and abandonment on the part of creatures

\* "I owe to the intercession of Father de La Colombière," she writes to Mother de Saumaise, June 6, 1688, "the cure of a finger on which I had a gathering of the same kind as that which was opened last year with a knife in several places."

Yet it is this which pure love demands, and, short of it, suffering does not deserve the name."

Our Lord, however, consoled her with His choicest graces. On Good Friday, as she was complaining that she could not receive Him in Holy Communion, presenting Himself to her He said, "Your desire, My Daughter, has so deeply penetrated My Heart that, if I had not instituted this Sacrament of Love, I would do so now in order to make Myself your food."

We may see, in the words which our Lord uttered to her on another occasion, the source of that wonderful humility which He imprinted on her soul, and which enabled Him, so to say, to communicate Himself so freely to her. "I will render you," our Lord said to her, "so poor, vile, and abject in your own eyes, I will so annihilate you in the thought of your own heart, that I may be able to build upon your nothing."

The Community appreciated the treasure they possessed in Margaret Mary, and named her a second time Assistant.\* She manifested in this office all that zeal and regularity which distinguished her, animated by a deep veneration and regard for everything that came from the holy Founders.

So great was the esteem entertained for her virtue that she met with but few exterior occasions of suffering.

\* This was on the re-election of Mother Marie Christine Melin, in May, 1687. Margaret Mary used every effort to escape this honourable charge, as she writes to her intimate friend Sister Félice Madeleine de La Barge. "As regards my office, you cannot think," she says, "how I felt my own weakness, owing to the want of submission I showed. I played so many parts in hopes of escaping the office I now hold, but all to no purpose."

The interior sufferings, however, which the sanctity of divine justice led her to endure for others, and especially for her "suffering friends" (as she called the souls in Purgatory), were so great that they reduced her in a manner to the last extremity. "It seems," she wrote to Father Rolin, "that I suffer in so strange a manner that I declare to you that if His infinite mercy did not strengthen me in proportion as His justice makes me feel the weight of His severity, it would be impossible for me to bear it for a moment. All this, however, is attended with unalterable peace."

The devil also, who had threatened never to leave her alone, finding that he could not destroy her, tried every means to persecute her.\*

On the Feast of her holy Founder this year, as she was begging for special graces for the Order, she was told by him that a true Daughter of the Visitation should be a living sacrifice, in imitation of Jesus Christ, receiving afflictions as they come, without having any regard to herself, in order to destroy those false lights which lead us only on the way to ruin. Those who did not maintain this disposition were not counted, he said, amongst his true Daughters.

As she made a similar petition on the day of the Visitation, our Lord seemed to turn a deaf ear to her entreaties. "They do not listen to My voice," He said,

\* The Sisters Claude Marguerite Billet, Marie Rosalie de Lyonne, and Françoise Angélique de Damas deposed in the juridical process that they had repeatedly seen her chair drawn suddenly away from under her, as Margaret Mary was seated by the fire. On one of them remarking to her that the devil must have something to do with it, she replied only by a smile, and resumed her seat.

“and they destroy the foundation of the building. If they think to raise it on a strange foundation I will overthrow it.” Our Blessed Lady upon this interceded for her Daughters. “They are the Daughters of my Heart,” she said; “I will be a mantle of protection to them, to receive the blows Thou wouldst inflict on them.” “My Mother,” replied our Lord, “thou hast all power to bestow My graces upon them at will.” Our Blessed Lady begged delay until the Feast of her Presentation, and promised to spare no pains to make the graces of her Son victorious, to destroy the claims of Satan, and to establish them in that spirit of humility and simplicity which, said our Lord, “should keep the Daughters of the Visitation hidden in Me, Who am their crucified Love.”

On several occasions after, Margaret Mary saw our Blessed Lady wearied, as it were, with her efforts to rescue the hearts of her Daughters from the hands of Satan, and to present them to her Divine Son.

The whole of the following year, 1688, was passed by Margaret Mary in a state of great interior suffering for the souls in Purgatory, to whom she had devoted herself from her first entrance into Religion. “I declare to you,” she writes in confidence to Mother de Saumaise, “that I do not remember ever to have passed such a year in regard of suffering. It seems to me that everything serves as an instrument in the hands of the divine justice to torment me. Nothing makes me suffer more than this sanctity of justice.”

It was during this year, however, on the Feast of the Visitation, that she was favoured with that remarkable Vision which, as we have already mentioned, she com-



municated to Mother de Saumaise, and in which the Daughters of the Visitation were appointed by the Blessed Virgin depositaries of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the Society of Jesus was entrusted with the special mission of making its true value known.

It was during this year, as we have remarked, that Margaret Mary had the happiness of being present at the solemn consecration of the chapel built by the pious care of the Mother Melin in honour of the Sacred Heart within the enclosure of the Monastery of Paray.\* It must have been also a great joy to her to see the Community come every first Friday of the month in procession to the chapel, singing the Litanies of the

\* This was the first building ever raised in honour of the Sacred Heart ; for the little chapels or oratories spoken of as raised either within the walls of Paray or in the Monasteries of Semur, Dijon, or Moulins, were, in fact, but altars prepared in some spot within the monastery, and set apart for that purpose. This precious monument of the first triumph of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart is still in existence. It stands within the garden of the monastery, and when the glorious relics of Blessed Margaret Mary were borne in joyful solemnity on the 22nd of June, 1865, the procession stopped for a while at this spot.

The painting of the Sacred Heart, designed to adorn this chapel, was placed over the altar at the time that the chapel was blessed. It was executed at Dijon, under the care of Mother de Saumaise, and was a copy of the miniature which had been sent to Margaret Mary by the Mother Greyfié. Margaret Mary thus conveyed to Mother de Saumaise her impression on first seeing it : " I cannot express to you the joy I felt on seeing our picture. I was never tired of looking at it." This picture is now in the Parish Church of Semur. A copy of it still adorns the chapel in which the original was first placed. The miniature sent by the Mother Greyfié, from which this was taken, and which witnessed the first homage paid by the Community of Paray to the Sacred Heart on June 21, 1686, has been lost sight of since the outbreak of the Revolution.

Sacred Heart and renew their acts of reparation and consecration to the Sacred Heart.

On the Feast of St. Francis of Sales, the following year, 1689, Margaret Mary was favoured again with special graces regarding the Order of the Visitation. "God having commanded me," said the holy Founder, "to visit all the monasteries of the Institute, in order to do this I have but to visit the hearts of the Mothers Superior, for within them the hearts of all the Daughters of the Visitation should be enclosed."

"The true Daughters of the Visitation," said the holy Foundress, who seemed to accompany him, "should rejoice only in the Cross, and glory in humiliations, for they should triumph only by the Cross. Let them put aside all claim to do more or less than is marked by the Rules. The best means we have of rising from our falls is the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our holy Founder has obtained It for our Institute, in order to prevent its being destroyed by the designs of a spirit foreign to our own, one full of pride and ambition, which seeks only to ruin the spirit of humility and simplicity which is the foundation of the whole building. Satan will never succeed in his designs as long as our Institute has the Sacred Heart for defender and support."

It was soon after this that the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was represented to Margaret Mary, as we have described above, under the figure of a beautiful tree, which took root in the Order and spread its branches through all its Houses; and the special mission of the Society to make known the Devotion was announced to her. It was at this time most probably

that she wrote that letter on the subject of the Devotion to Father Rolin, her Director, which, as we have remarked, is commonly regarded as addressed to Father de La Colombière.

The esteem and veneration entertained for Margaret Mary by the Community increased daily, and became so general that on the termination of the Mother Melin's six years' Superiority in 1690, there was thought of choosing her for Mother Superior. She had received intimation of this on Holy Thursday (March 23, 1690), when our Lord presented her with a cross which she accepted, without understanding what it meant. On hearing afterwards of what was contemplated by the Community, she complained to our Lord, "Is it possible, O my God, that Thou wouldst allow a creature such as I am to be exposed by being placed at the head of a Community? I beg of Thee to remove this cross from me; I submit to any other."

Our Lord granted her request, and the Mother Catherine Antoinette de Lévy Châteaumorand was chosen Mother Superior, to the great joy of Margaret Mary.

Margaret Mary, overcoming her own reluctance to the charge of Assistant, in which she knew that the Mother Superior wished to leave her, yielded to the will of our Lord, and withdrawing her opposition to it, was continued in the charge, to the great happiness of the Community. All addressed themselves to her with great confidence, and profited by the supernatural lights and graces which she received from our Lord, in order to be able to assist them in their interior troubles.

Her conversation was all of God, and she spoke in so moving and engaging a manner of Him that her words induced all to love Him. She spoke often of submission to the will of God from the motive of love, and she said that this was one of the surest means of attaining to sanctity. She exemplified this herself in the discharge of her office, and in all the actions of her life.

Margaret Mary had continued hitherto to practise the hour's prayer on the night between Thursday and Friday. But the Mother Catherine Antoinette, seeing how weak and exhausted she was, thought it was unsuited to her state of health, and forbade her the practice of this or any other kind of austerity. Blessed Margaret Mary accepted this prohibition with admirable submission, replying that our Lord indeed required the practice of her, but that since it did not seem well to obedience to allow it, she would remain at peace. The Mother Superior was greatly edified at this, as she feared that she might in some manner have been unduly attached to such practices. She received also great consolation from the frankness and openness with which she spoke to her, and her esteem for her increased in proportion.

Hence Margaret Mary would often say, "I shall not live much longer, for I have no longer anything to suffer, our dear Mother takes too much care of me." This was indeed true; for she lived but four months from this time.

Another time she said to a Sister, "I shall die, without a doubt, this year, in order that I may not hinder the great fruit which our Divine Lord designs

to produce by means of a book of Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."\*

She had such faith in the promises of our Lord regarding the final triumph of the Devotion, that she never doubted, as she told Father de La Colombière, even though the whole world should combine against it, to see it established. She often repeated the words which she had heard from our Lord Himself—"I will reign in spite of My enemies and of all who oppose themselves to My designs."

\* The author of this work, entitled *Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ*, was Father John Croiset, S.J. He died at Avignon, January 31, 1738, leaving behind him a great reputation for sanctity. "This Religious," says Monsignor Languet in his *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary*, "was astonished on hearing what the servant of God had said of him, more especially as he had not spoken of his intention to any one. Subsequently, he fulfilled the prophecy in part by actually publishing the book which bears this title; the remainder of the prophecy we see daily accomplished in the spiritual advantage derived by so many souls from this book, which is relished by all, and several editions of which have been already published."

It is well known that one of the editions of Father Croiset's work was placed on the Index in 1704, probably, says Father Nilles, S.J. (*De rationibus Fectorum SS. Cordis Jesu et purissimi Cordis Mariæ*), on account of its containing an Office of the Sacred Heart not yet approved, or perhaps, as some others suppose, because, in explaining the object of the Devotion, an adequate position is not given to the real material Heart of our Lord. Great advantage was taken of this fact by the Jansenist party in Italy. But in the *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary* which appeared with due approval in Rome, in 1864, dedicated to His Holiness Pius IX., is contained the following account of the work of Father Croiset:—"It is to the following circumstances that we are indebted for the work of Father Croiset." Then are related the circumstances which have been already mentioned, and which induced Father Croiset, at that time Professor in the College at Lyons, to prepare, at the request of his scholars, a work on the Sacred Heart. "He saw," continues the account, "that

She lived to see it widely spread; the diocese of Autun, however, was the last, according to her own prediction, to recognise it. This she declared, in her humility, was because she was an obstacle to it. The Bishop, Monsignor d'Hallencourt, did not grant permission for the celebration of the Feast, with the Mass and Office proper, until 1713.

How great was the purity of her conscience we may judge from the fact that Father Rolin, after hearing a general confession of her life during a Retreat she

such a work, so eagerly called for as it was, would prove extremely useful, and he accordingly prepared an edition. This was in the year 1690, in which year Margaret Mary died. As Father Croiset was prevented bringing it out till the following year, he was thus enabled to add an account of the virtues of Blessed Margaret Mary, and of the wonderful graces bestowed upon her. Father Croiset's work was no sooner published than it was rapidly bought up, and several editions were soon called for. In 1694 it was printed at Bordeaux, with the authority of the Archbishop, and went through several editions. Others followed at Aurillac, and another at Besançon in 1699. The fullest and most complete edition was published at Lyons, in 1698, prepared by Father Croiset himself. Those who desire to understand more particularly the spirit and practice of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to derive from it all the fruit it is calculated to produce, will find in this book matter of edification no less than instruction. The number of editions the book has gone through is a proof of its merits, and the fruit it has produced in the hearts of all who have put it in practice shows its utility better than anything that can be said about it. If the devotion of the Faithful has rapidly exhausted the various editions of this work, they on the other hand have spread the Devotion everywhere. In this manner has been verified another prediction of Blessed Margaret Mary, who said that by means of a book by Father Croiset, of the Society of Jesus, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart should be spread everywhere" (*Vita della Beata Margherita Maria Alacoque, Religiosa Professa dell' Ordine della Visitazione di Santa Maria nel Monastero di Paray-le-Monial. Dedicata alla Santità di Nostro Signore Papa Pio IX. Roma, 1864. Tipographia Salviucci*).

made towards the close of it, hesitated for some time whether he should not order her to put it in writing and keep it, in order that after her death it might appear to what innocence and exalted sanctity a soul could attain which Almighty God had watched over and enriched with His singular graces from her very cradle. Our Lord was still more liberal to her towards the close of her life, and she received from Him some most consoling assurances, which she never very definitely explained.

She was desirous, however, of preparing herself for death, which she declared was near, by a kind of interior Retreat of forty days, during which she maintained a more intimate recollection, though attending at the same time to her duties as Assistant, in order that she might ascertain whence came that ardent desire she had to die.

"Since the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen (July 22, 1690), I have felt extremely desirous," she says, "to reform my life, in order to hold myself ready to appear before the sanctity of God, Whose justice is so terrible and His judgments unsearchable." "I have proposed then," she continues, "with a view to this, to make an interior Retreat in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ."

Blessed Margaret Mary had been now for some years so united to God that neither her sleep nor any occupation was capable of interrupting this union. She was entirely detached from herself, and from every object in the world. Her only suffering arose from the fact that she no longer suffered, and her soul enjoyed such a tranquillity that it was capable even of inspiring her with alarm. "I do not know what to think of the

state I am now in," she wrote to her Director, Father Rolin, in a letter which we have partly quoted before. "Every desire has so ceased within me that I am surprised at it. I am afraid that this pretended peace may be an effect of that state of insensibility in which God sometimes leaves faithless souls. I can no longer now wish or desire anything in this world, though I see that in point of virtue I am altogether destitute. I would fain sometimes grieve but I cannot, for it is no longer in my power, so to say, to act. I feel only a perfect acquiescence in the good pleasure of God, and an unspeakable pleasure in suffering. The thought which consoles me from time to time is that the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ will do all for me if I leave It to act; It will will, love, and desire for me, and will supply for all my defects."

It would seem that our Lord had accomplished in her His designs, and that He was now putting the last stroke, as it were, to the marvellous work He had wrought in her soul. It is difficult to know which most to admire, the wonderful graces and favours she received from our Lord, or the fidelity with which she corresponded to them. Her whole life was an exercise of high and solid virtue, and in her death her last act was one of pure love.

She was attacked by a slight fever on the eve of the annual Retreat. Being asked by a Sister whether she thought she should be able to make it, "Yes," she replied, "but it will be the great Retreat." She was confined to her bed for nine days before her death. These she employed in preparing for the coming of her Spouse, though her illness appeared to be only trifling.



The physician of the monastery, M. Billet, had often had occasion to observe the illnesses of Blessed Margaret Mary. There was something about them inexplicable by the common laws of nature. They were caused, he said, by divine love, and there was no remedy for them. He gave it as his opinion now that there was nothing serious. Even on the very day of her death he declared that there was no appearance that she was likely to die. Margaret Mary, however, remained unchanged in her opinion.

The certainty she felt of her approaching death made her ask earnestly for the holy Viaticum. On being told that it was not thought desirable, she begged that at least she might be allowed to receive Holy Communion, as she was still fasting. This she was allowed to do, and she received the Blessed Sacrament by way of Viaticum, being well assured that she was receiving It for the last time. With what ardent love she received our Lord may be judged from the love she had ever entertained for Him in this adorable Mystery.

A Sister, observing that she suffered greatly, offered to procure her some relief. Margaret Mary thanked her, but replied that the short time that remained was too precious not to turn it to the best account. All who saw her were struck with the extraordinary joy she manifested at the thought of death. But our Lord was pleased to interrupt for a time the extraordinary sweetness she experienced, and filled her soul with such a dread of His justice that she was seized on a sudden with a strange terror at the thought of the judgments of God.

She was seen to tremble ; she bowed her soul before her crucifix, and repeated frequently : “ Mercy, O my God, mercy ! ” This terror, however, soon afterwards disappeared. Her soul enjoyed a great calm, and she was filled with an assurance of her salvation. Joy and peace appeared again upon her countenance, and she exclaimed : “ *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo ;* ” at other times : “ What have I in heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth ? ” \*

Her difficulty of breathing was so great that she could no longer remain lying in bed, and it was necessary to support her in order to enable her to draw her breath. “ I am burning, I am burning ! ” she often exclaimed. “ What a happiness would it be were it only with divine love ! But I have never known how to love my God perfectly. ” Then turning to those who were supporting her, † “ Beg pardon of Him for me, ” she said, “ and love Him with all your hearts to make reparation for all the time during which I have failed to do so. Oh ! what a happiness to love God ! Love, then, this Love, and love Him perfectly. ” She uttered these words with such transport, that it was evident her own heart was full of this divine love. “ Shall I go on long ? ” she asked ; and when told that the physician was of opinion that she would not die, “ Ah, Lord ! ” she exclaimed, “ when wilt Thou withdraw me from this place of exile ? ” repeating frequently, “ *Ad Te levavi oculos meos,* ” &c., “ *Lætatus sum in his*

\* Psalm lxxii. 25.

† These were Sister Frances Verchère and Sister Péronne Rosalie de Farges, from whose relation this account is taken. Blessed Margaret Mary had herself told them, some years before, that she should expire in their arms.

quæ dicta sunt mihi," &c. "Yes, I hope," she said, "that through the mercy of the Sacred Heart we shall go into the House of the Lord." She asked those about her to repeat the Litany of the Sacred Heart, and also that of the Blessed Virgin, and to invoke her holy Founder, her Guardian Angel, and St. Joseph.

The love of humiliations and the desire of being forgotten and unknown by creatures, which had so characterised her whole life, remained with her to her last breath. A few hours before her death, she made her Mother Superior\* promise that she would never speak of anything she had ever told her in confidence which might turn to her advantage. And calling one of the Sisters who had been her Novice,† and whom she had a great regard for on account of her virtue, she asked her to write without delay to Father Rolin, to beg of him to burn her letters and to observe inviolably the secrecy which she had so often asked of him.

An hour before she expired she sent word to the Mother Superior, having promised her that she would not die without letting her know. She begged to be allowed to receive Extreme Unction. When it had been administered, she thanked the Mother Superior for all the kindness and attention shown her and the desire that was manifested to give her relief, but told her that she no longer needed it, and that nothing more remained for her now but to bury herself in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, and there to breathe forth her last sigh.

\* Mother de Lévy Châteaumorand.

† Sister Péronne Rosalie de Farges.

After this she remained for some time perfectly calm, and pronouncing the holy name of JESUS, she peacefully breathed forth her spirit in an act of that ardent love which had from her earliest years taken such complete possession of her soul.

The physician, on coming immediately after she had expired, appeared much surprised, for he said he had discovered no symptoms which led him to anticipate so sudden a death. He had been constantly surprised, he said, during her life to observe how, with so wasted a frame, she could have borne the serious illnesses she had had. But as it was divine love, he said, which had caused them, so he did not doubt her unexpected death was to be ascribed to the same cause. He could not refrain from expressing the effect produced upon his mind by her virtues. He told the Sisters that they had lost in her the most perfect Religious he had ever been acquainted with, and that he did not doubt that they possessed in her now a powerful advocate with the Sacred Heart.

Margaret Mary died on October 17, 1690, in the forty-second year of her age, and the eighteenth of her Religious Profession, about eight o'clock in the evening, in the arms of the two Sisters to whom she had herself predicted this several years before.\*

"The Saint is dead!" was the expression which immediately announced the event in the monastery and

\* In commemoration of the moment when Blessed Margaret Mary breathed forth her soul, the Community of Paray have been in the habit of repairing in procession every year on the 17th of October, between seven and eight in the evening, to the room in which she expired, now converted into a chapel, there to join in prayers and cantiques.

throughout the town. The concourse of the people at her funeral was so great that the Priests were often interrupted in the ceremony by the noise of persons begging that their beads might touch the body. All were desirous of obtaining some relic of her. She had lived and died in such poverty that nothing was to be found in her cell besides her Rules and her discipline.

Blessed Margaret Mary's body was deposited in the ordinary burial-place of the Community, beneath the choir. In 1703 the coffin was opened, and the precious bones were collected and placed in a case of oak, near the spot where she had been buried. Here they remained until the period of the expulsion of the Sisters in 1792.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1690—1864.

THE constant recourse of the Faithful to the intercession of Margaret Mary, and the numerous favours\* obtained through her intercession strengthening daily the general opinion of her sanctity, the Bishop of Autun, Monsignor d'Hallencourt, yielding to the earnest solicitations of Mother Anne Elizabeth de La Garde, the Mother Superior of Paray, caused a process of inquiry to be instituted in 1715 into the life and miracles of the

\* The first authentic miracle wrought through the intercession of Margaret Mary was the cure of the Sister Claude Angélique Desmoulins, twenty years of age, and Professed of the Monastery of Paray. She had been confined to her bed for three months, half of her body being paralysed. She had left off for a month applying any remedies, all having been found useless, when, being strongly urged by Sister Péronne Rosalie de Farges to have recourse to the intercession of Margaret Mary, she agreed to do so. She complied at first only to satisfy the Sister, but having had a dream, February 18, 1713, in which she thought she was cured by wearing a dress which had touched the body of Margaret Mary, she asked on waking to be allowed to put it on. The Infirmarian having with difficulty placed it upon her, a quarter of an hour after she felt perfectly cured, asked for her clothes, dressed herself, and walked into the Choir where the Community were reciting Prime. A *Te Deum* was sung in thanksgiving, and the joy was universal. The doctors who had attended her were called in at once, and gave their attestations that the cure was miraculous. M. Languet, at that time Vicar-General of the diocese of Autun, and Spiritual Father of the Monastery of Paray, regarded the miracle as most solidly attested, and was careful to take juridical information regarding it.

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servant of God. M. Languet, at that time Vicar-General of the diocese, was charged with the care of conducting it, but having been raised, in the meantime, to the see of Soissons, he handed over his commission, with due authorisation, to Dom de Bansière, Prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Paray. This juridical process, instituted during the lifetime of many of the contemporaries of Margaret Mary, forms the basis of all the subsequent proceedings. The original documents relating to it are preserved in the archives of the Bishop of Autun and in those of the Monastery of Paray. Owing, however, to the absorbing character of the public events which affected so closely the interests of the Church at this time, springing from Jansenism, the false philosophy of the period, and the Revolution, the Cause remained for some time suspended at the same stage.

The confidence of the Faithful, nevertheless, in the intercession of Margaret Mary remained meanwhile unabated, and her tomb was constantly visited. The circular letters of the Monastery of Paray give us the names of some illustrious visitors to the shrine, amongst others of the Cardinal de Bouillon, who was fond of comparing the vaults of Paray to the catacombs of Rome, both from their form of structure and from their containing the bones of Blessed Margaret Mary ; of Monsignor Malvin de Montazet, Bishop of Autun in 1750, who, after satisfying his devotion, expressed his hope to see the faithful lover of our Lord honoured one day by the public veneration of the Faithful, and his desire to employ all his zeal, as far as he was able, in promoting the Cause.

The year 1786 witnessed an interesting ceremony at Paray, in the celebration of the first centenary of the public recognition of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart by the Community. "We chose the 21st of June," wrote the Sisters in their circular letter of that year, "as being a memorable day on which, one hundred years before, our esteemed Sister des Escures exposed in the Choir the picture which had been honoured in the Novitiate in the year 1685.\* We obtained permission to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed the whole day, and we spent the day in thanking our Lord for the favour He had conferred on our Institute, and our House in particular, in honouring us with the gift of His Sacred Heart.

The day was closed by a visit in procession to the chapel within the enclosure, dedicated to the Sacred Heart. It was an interesting sight to see on either side of the Altar the two cases containing the precious relics of Father de La Colombière and Blessed Margaret Mary, not far from the spot where the fervent Disciple of the Sacred Heart had been seen kneeling for three hours absorbed in prayer, on the occasion of the blessing of the chapel on September 7th, 1688.

A melancholy event, meanwhile, was impending over the Community. On the 16th of September, 1792, intimation was given to them that they would be required to quit their monastery on the 23rd.

On the night preceding this day, which had been

\* It would seem, however, from the account above given, that the picture which received the homage of the Community in 1686 was different from that which was first exposed in the Novitiate in 1685.



ushered in by attempts at violence on the part of the populace, the Sisters heard Mass and received Holy Communion, and on the following night quitted their peaceful seclusion, carrying with them in part the precious treasure of their relics ; a part they consigned to the care of the Sisters who had charge of the hospital, and by whom they were faithfully restored on the re-establishment of their monastery. The case, however, containing the relics of Blessed Margaret Mary they entrusted to one of their own Sisters, who was remaining with her friends in the neighbourhood of the monastery. On her being obliged later to return to her own native district, she consigned her sacred trust to Sister Mary Teresa Petit,\* a young Religious of Paray, whose family joyfully took charge of it, and preserved it with veneration till the year 1801.

For eight years the Sisters were obliged to live separated one from the other. The Concordat of 1801 enabled them to reassemble, and they were even able

\* This was the Sister whose miraculous cure holds the first place among the three miracles recognised in the Apostolic Decree respecting the miracles of Blessed Margaret Mary published April 24, 1864. It is interesting to hear the evidence given on oath by the Sister regarding these precious relics whilst under her keeping. "I declare," she says, "that having been placed in charge of the precious remains of our Venerable Sister Alacoque during the stormy period of the Revolution, I was never at pains to conceal them, though on several occasions domiciliary visits were paid to our house. The most impious would never allow a word to be said against the precious treasure, nor did they ever lose the confidence they had in the protection of the servant of God. They had recourse to her relics themselves in their illnesses, and many have told me that they had experienced the effects of her power with God. And this was the case not only with inhabitants of the town, but other persons also came from a great distance to visit these relics."

to rent a portion of the monastery, though on very hard terms. To these, however, they submitted, to avoid the alternative of seeing their cherished monuments, hallowed as they were by so many sacred memories, destroyed by their revolutionary owner. They have secured by this act the undying gratitude of those for whom they preserved these treasured memorials.

The little colony numbered nine persons, at the head of whom was the esteemed Mother Verchère. Several of the older Sisters were dead ; others were obliged for a time to remain with their families. The precious relics of Blessed Margaret now found their place again in the keeping of the Community.

The Sisters, obliged to find a means of support in the state of destitution to which they had been reduced, undertook the work of education, and yielding to the wishes of the families who consigned their children to their care, they added a boarding-school to the charge which they had at first undertaken of externs. Their increasing numbers obliged them to look out for a larger site, and the authorities of the town having offered them accommodation at the ancient priory of the Benedictines, they moved thither, and a second time quitted their monastery, in 1809.

The relics of Blessed Margaret Mary still accompanied them in their changes, and inspired them with the hope of returning one day to their own monastery, and resuming the Rules of Religious life. The difficulties, however, appeared insurmountable, and in 1817, the Community of Moulins having reunited at Charité-sur-Loire, the greater number of the Sisters,

in their desire to embrace once again the happiness of regular life, eagerly joined them. Two only of the number, Mary Rose Carmoy and Mary Teresa Petit, by a special disposition, as it would seem, of Divine Providence, remained at Paray by an express order of the Bishop, who still cherished the hope of seeing the monastery re-established, and who wished that there should be on the spot members of the old Community, on whom the young Community might be grafted.

When the Sisters who were leaving for Charité-sur-Loire desired to take with them the relics of Blessed Margaret Mary, the civil authorities interposed. The seals of the town were placed upon them, and they were handed over to the keeping of the Curé of the parish. Such was the manner in which this precious treasure was preserved to Paray.

The two Sisters, Mary Rose and Mary Teresa, continued the work of education at Paray, and so great was the influence they gained amongst the families of the town, that they began to entertain hopes of seeing their beloved monastery restored to them. This was indeed brought about a few years later, through the means of the Bishop, Mgr. Roch-Etienne de Vichy, and by his influence the monastery was purchased for fifty thousand francs, and a further sum contributed, at his appeal, for restoring it in a manner suited to its character.

On the 16th of June, 1823, the monastery was solemnly blessed, amidst a vast concourse of Priests and laity, by Mgr. de Vichy. The relics of Blessed Margaret Mary had been placed in a little oratory adjoining the Choir, where they remained for a year.

They were then removed, in order to avoid all appearance of anticipating the decision of the Church by any public honour, and were placed, secured by a key, in a tomb prepared at the entrance of the Choir, and covered with a monumental slab.

These precautions had been taken in conformity with instructions received from Rome in favour of the Cause, Mgr. de Vichy having applied in 1819 to the Holy See for authorisation to remove it. This authorisation was granted, and the Vicar-General came to Paray, instructed by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, to institute a preliminary inquiry. The object of the inquiry was to establish in a general manner that there seemed to be nothing to prevent the Cause being sent to Rome, and that the opinion of the heroic virtues of the servant of God, and of her power with God, was sufficiently well founded in the minds of the Faithful to give reasonable hope of the Cause succeeding. The process was crowned with complete success, and by a Decree of March 30, 1824, the Cause was introduced at Rome, and Margaret Mary received the title of Venerable.

On the 22nd of July, 1830, the tomb in which the relics of Margaret Mary had been deposited was solemnly opened by Mgr. d'Hericourt, who had succeeded Mgr. de Vichy in the see of Autun. The relics were duly examined, enclosed in a case of walnut-wood, and removed from the Choir, in order to avoid all appearance of anticipated public veneration, preparatory to placing them in a spot prepared for them in the Cloister.

Hither they were conducted in procession, the

Episcopal seal was placed upon them, and on the stone which covered them was engraved the simple inscription, "Here lies the Venerable Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque." On this occasion occurred the glorious cure of Sister Mary Teresa Petit, which we have spoken of as receiving from the Apostolic Decree its character of a true miracle.

The Decree establishing the heroic character of the virtues of Margaret Mary, which had been prepared in May, 1846, the date of the death of Gregory XVI., was drawn up by order of His Holiness Pius IX., in August, 1846, and on the twenty-third of the same month, the Holy Father surprised the Sisters by a visit to the monastery, and there promulgated the Decree himself in person. "We entertain a particular inclination towards your Order," were the words of the Holy Father before quitting the monastery, "because it is founded on the gentleness of St. Francis of Sales."

His Holiness gave proof of this by giving orders for the prosecution of the Cause, and on the 24th of April, 1864, the Decree was published establishing the truth of the miracles attributed to Margaret Mary, and on the 24th of June of the same year the Decree of the Beatification was published with great solemnity in the Lateran Basilica.

Margaret Mary having received from the Church the title of Blessed, Mgr. Borghi, Chamberlain to His Holiness, and Postulator of the Cause, was delegated from Rome to preside, with the Bishop of Autun, at the opening of her tomb, preparatory to the solemn exaltation of her relics. On the 13th of July, the slab which covered the tomb was removed, by order of the

two Prelates, in presence of a large body of the Clergy who had assembled from different parts of France.

The sacred case containing the relics was borne in procession into the interior of the monastery. After the seals had been removed, and the relics formally examined, the body of Blessed Margaret Mary was placed temporarily in a rich case, sealed, and then borne in procession to the throne which had been prepared for its reception in the centre of the Choir. After the celebration of the day by solemn services in the church of the monastery and in the parish church of Paray, Mgr. Borghi returned on the following day to Rome, in order to make preparations for the great solemnity of the Beatification, which was fixed for the 18th of September.

It is not necessary to describe here the splendour of St. Peter's, the illuminations, the inscriptions, the notes of joy given to the city by the bells and the cannon from the Castle of St. Angelo, as the *Te Deum* was entoned on the reading of the Apostolic Decree of the Beatification, and the veil fell from before the picture of Blessed Margaret Mary representing her ascending on her way to Heaven.

The day was celebrated with all solemnity and every demonstration of joy at Paray, and a relic of Blessed Margaret Mary was presented to the public veneration of the Clergy and the Faithful.

The general enthusiasm manifested itself in a resolution to raise an oratory in commemoration of this happy event. An elegant building was commenced in the spring of the following year, 1865; it was built at the entrance to the town, and will be the first chapel

dedicated to Blessed Margaret Mary, as soon as her Canonisation shall allow of its being duly consecrated to her.

The handsomest monument, however, was a large case of silver, the joint contribution of the piety of France, Belgium, Spain, and England, adorned with gold, enamel, and precious stones, destined to contain the effigy and relics of Blessed Margaret Mary, and in which they were duly placed with the most religious preparation and care, preparatory to the celebration of the solemn Triduum of thanksgiving, fixed for the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th days of June.

There were present at these solemnities a large number of Prelates, numerous Religious of all Orders, above six hundred Priests, and more than a hundred thousand persons who attended at different times. The relics of Blessed Margaret Mary were solemnly translated in a procession which, by a special authorisation obtained from Rome, passed through the town to the sanctuary of the parish church, where they remained during the rest of the Triduum, and were finally deposited under the high altar of the church of the monastery. This shrine, before which fifteen lamps are kept burning day and night, is constantly visited by the piety of numerous pilgrims.

The cell in which the humble Disciple of the Sacred Heart breathed forth her pure soul has been transformed into a chapel. On the altar are preserved many relics of Blessed Margaret Mary. This oratory was blessed by Mgr. de Marguerye, Bishop of Autun, who there offered the Holy Sacrifice on the 10th of June, 1866. The same Prelate has ever taken every

occasion in his visits to Rome of advancing the Cause of Blessed Margaret Mary. Urged by him, numerous Cardinals, Bishops, and persons of rank, have begged of His Holiness to give orders for the Cause to be resumed. On the 6th of September, 1866, His Holiness was pleased to sign the order for resuming the Cause. We have thus a guarantee for looking forward with hope to the time when we may invoke Blessed Margaret Mary under the title of Saint.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

1697—1864.

BLESSED MARGARET MARY appears to hold the same place with regard to the Feast of the Sacred Heart which is held by Blessed Juliana in regard of the Feast of Corpus Christi. It was to Margaret Mary that the revelation was made by our Blessed Lord enjoining the establishment of the Feast, and it is from the particulars of this revelation that we are to draw our knowledge of the design our Lord had in view in instituting it, and of the distinctive character of the Devotion, which is in a manner embodied in it.

The Sacred Heart of our Lord, it is obvious to remark, has been an object of devotion from the first moment of Its existence, and has awakened the ardent love of the Faithful from the earliest ages of the Church. A long train of names may be adduced of Saints who have in express terms breathed forth their devotion to the Sacred Heart. The names of St. Austin, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, SS. Gertrude and Mechtildis, arise spontaneously to the memory when the Sacred Heart is mentioned, and their burning and tender words glow with the divine fire and exhale the divine perfume and sweetness which rise from the depths of the Devotion.

But it seemed to be in the designs of the Divine Providence, which knows the times and seasons of the

Church, and reserves the fitting remedy for the moment of its need, to defer the bestowal of the precious gift of the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word upon the Faithful in general until such time as love and faith had grown cold and called for this sovereign gift which was to cast the fire of divine love into the hearts of all. Such is the truth conveyed by the answer of St. John the Evangelist to St. Gertrude, as we read in her *Insinuations of Divine Piety*.\* On her asking him "Why it was that he had not explained for the good of the Church all the beatings of the Divine and Sacred Heart of Jesus, having drunk them in himself from their source as he lay on the Bosom of our Lord?" he replied, we are told, that "the full persuasive sweetness of the beatings of that Divine Heart was reserved to be revealed at a later time, when the world should have grown old and be sunk in tepidity, that it might thus be rekindled and reawakened to the love of God."

And how could this be done more effectually than by the Devotion to the Sacred Heart? Such would seem to have been the design of our Blessed Lord in revealing it to Blessed Margaret Mary. "That He might the more enkindle the fire of divine charity," are the words of the Decree of her Beatification, "He would have the veneration and worship of His most Sacred Heart established and promoted in His Church. For who is there so hard-hearted and unfeeling as not to be moved to make a return of love to that most amiable Heart Which was pierced and wounded with the lance in order that our souls might find therein a hiding-place and secure retreat, to which we might betake ourselves

\* Bk. iv., ch. iv.

in safety from the attacks and snares of our enemies? Who would not be provoked to show every mark of love and honour to that Sacred Heart from the Wound of Which flowed forth water and blood, the source of our life and salvation?"

The origin then of this Devotion is to be traced to the divine providence of our Lord, and the marvellous rapidity with which it has spread through the hearts of the Faithful is to be attributed to the action of the Holy Spirit, Whose office it is to glorify our Lord, by carrying out His design of making Himself known to mankind. This reflection supplies the answer to the objection which is sometimes urged to the selection of the Sacred Heart of our Lord in particular, from amongst the other portions of His Sacred Body, as an object of the devotion of the Faithful. It is no human invention, but it is a manifestation of the divine will made known by a private revelation, under the authoritative sanction of the Church, and carried out by the interior action of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the Faithful.

The origin, then, of this work of divine wisdom and goodness we see in the history of the revelation made to Blessed Margaret Mary, whose whole life seemed designed only to prepare her for discharging her glorious mission of making known this Devotion. Such is the language of the Decree of the Beatification: "In order to establish and spread far and wide amongst mankind this so saving and just a Devotion, our Saviour vouchsafed to choose His servant, the Venerable Margaret Mary, who by her innocence of life and constant practice of every virtue proved herself worthy, with

the aid of divine grace, of this exalted office and charge."

The progress of this Devotion is to be read in the marvellous success with which it made its way in every part of the world, in the face of great difficulties, and without the aid of human support.

The approval of the Church is to be seen in the history of those successive grants made to the repeated petitions of the Faithful. It is interesting to notice, on the one hand, the proofs of the constantly increasing devotion of the Faithful, and on the other the watchful care with which the Church seeks to keep in check and at length fully to comply with the pious wishes of her children.

We are called upon here, however, first to notice the position held by our Blessed Lady in relation to the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord. The true Morning Star, as she ushers in at her birth the rising of the Sun of Justice, Who is to light up a benighted world and warm it with His rays, so by the devotion which she awakens in the hearts of men by her Immaculate Heart she prepares them to receive the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of her Divine Son.

It was only a few months after the date of the birth of Blessed Margaret Mary, the Apostle of the Sacred Heart of our Lord, that Père Eudes, who had devoted himself and the Congregation he had formed to the most pure Heart of our Lady, was celebrating in the Cathedral of Autun, within a few miles of her birth-place, the first solemn Mass in honour of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Born in 1601, near Argentan, Père Eudes had manifested from his earliest

years the most tender devotion to Jesus and Mary. Brought up under the Fathers de Bérulle and de Condren, in the society founded by M. Olier, he had been taught to give the first place in his heart to a personal devotion to the Divine Mother and her Son, and in every mystery to fathom the depths which are to be found in the thought of them. So jealous was he of preserving the treasure which he found in them, that he formed the resolution in 1641 of employing the rest of his life in promoting the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. With this view, he began by consecrating to the most pure Heart of Mary, which he ever regarded as one with the Heart of Jesus, the two Religious Congregations which he established at this period, the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge and the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. The invocations in daily and familiar use in these Congregations breathe and express the devotion with which their holy Founder was animated, and that peculiar characteristic of his devotion, to which we have alluded, by which he regarded the two Sacred Hearts but as one. "Hail most loving Heart of Jesus and Mary!" was their constant aspiration. "Blessed be the most loving Heart of Jesus and Mary, for ever and beyond all eternity!"

It was Père Eudes who inspired the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria, Mother of Louis XIV. of France, with so lively a devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

By means of the Congregation of Priests which he had formed, he spread throughout the provinces which he had visited the same Devotion, and everywhere he

erected Confraternities either of the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Lady or of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary. In 1673—1674, Clement X. addressed to him six Briefs in favour of Confraternities erected or about to be erected in the Seminaries of his Congregation under the invocation of the Heart of Jesus and Mary.\*

In order to meet the wants of some souls who, though not called to embrace religious life, yet aspire to a higher degree of sanctity than is compatible with the ordinary condition of persons living in the world, he founded a new Association under the title of the “Society of the Children of the Sacred Heart of the Mother Most Admirable.”

Père Eudes also sought by the publication of numerous works to propagate still more widely the Devotion to the Sacred Hearts. His principal work is entitled, *The Book of the most admirable Heart of the most Holy Mother of God*. He finished it only a few days before the close of his life, and it was not printed until two years after his death, in 1682.

Père Eudes celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary, as we have seen, by permission of the Bishop, Mgr. de Ragny, with great solemnity in the Cathedral of Autun in 1648. It was celebrated afterwards in the dioceses of Soissons, Evreux, Bourges, and in other parts of France.

In 1669, Père Eudes obtained permission also from Mgr. de Vieuville, Bishop of Rennes, who had entrusted him with the charge of his diocesan seminary, for the Priests of his Congregation to celebrate solemnly every

\* *Sub invocatione Cordis Jesu et Mariæ.*

year the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with an octave. He received also about the same time similar permission from several other Bishops of France in their several dioceses. The day fixed for the celebration of the Feast was the 20th of October.

In this manner did the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary, so ardently propagated by Père Eudes, lead the way to the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and prepare the hearts of the Faithful, by the local recognition of the Feast on the part of the Bishops of France, for receiving the Devotion when it should be manifested by special revelation to Blessed Margaret Mary, and sanctioned for the Church in general by the Apostolical authority of the Holy See.

In 1697, then, seven years after the death of Blessed Margaret Mary, we first meet with a petition presented to the Holy See, under the Pontificate of Innocent XII., by Mary of Modena, Queen of James II. of England, for the institution of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with a proper Mass, for the churches of the Religious of the Visitation.

In support of the petition was urged by the Postulator of the Cause the devotion of the Daughters of St. Francis of Sales, instilled into them by their Founder, towards the Sacred Heart of Jesus, supported by the earnest request on the part of the Queen of England. The principal objection to the petition was founded on the alleged inexpediency of introducing a new Feast into the Church. The Sacred Congregation judged it most prudent, under the circumstances, to adopt a middle course, and, by a Decree dated March 30, 1627, granted permission to the Religious of

the Visitation to keep the Feast of the Five Wounds on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi.

After a lapse of about thirty years, under the Pontificate of Benedict XIII., still more fervent petitions, according to the expression of Benedict XIV., were addressed to the Holy See by the Religious of the Visitation, supported by Augustus, King of Poland, and the Bishops of Cracow and Marseilles, for the grant of a proper Office and Mass in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The circumstances which led the city of Marseilles to take so deep an interest in the cause of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart are well known. Whilst several thousands of the inhabitants were swept off daily by the plague which ravaged the city, their heroic Bishop, Henry Francis Xavier de Belsunce, placed all his hope in consecrating his flock by a public and solemn act to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. No sooner was this done, than the plague stayed its ravages.

The Postulator of the Cause on this occasion was Father Joseph de Galliffet, S.J., who printed and published in Rome this same year, 1726, his famous work, *On the Worship of the Sacred Heart of our God and Lord Jesus Christ*. He drew up also, and distributed amongst the members of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, papers on the same subject, "than which," according to the expression of Benedict XIV., "nothing could be more perfect." Testimonies were brought from Monsignor Languet's *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary*, and from the *Book of Retreats* by Father de La Colombière, and catalogues produced of the various kingdoms, provinces, dioceses, and Religious Orders in



which Confraternities in honour of the Sacred Heart were established.

The principal argument adduced in favour of the establishment of the Feast was founded upon the establishment by the Church of the Feast of Corpus Christi, which owed its rise to a private revelation made to Blessed Juliana of Liege.

The office of "Promotor Fidei" on this occasion was discharged by Prosper Lambertini, afterwards Benedict XIV. It was urged in objection by him that the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart would give rise to demands for other Feasts in honour of other parts of our Lord's sacred Body; that the revelation made to Margaret Mary, unlike that made to Blessed Juliana, had not yet been juridically examined or established by any well-authenticated miracle. He added also, as he states himself in his famous work,\* that it was laid down as certain by the Postulators of the Cause that the heart was, in man, the sensible co-principle of the affections, and the centre of all interior joy and grief, but that, as this was a philosophical question, the Church would act prudently in abstaining from deciding it. "On this account," he remarks, "I suggested with due reverence that the petition should not be granted."

The Sacred Congregation of Rites, not wishing to anticipate the judgment of the Holy See regarding the revelation made to Margaret Mary, or to appear to favour one side rather than another in the philosophical question, gave for answer, July 12, 1726, *Non proposita*, a form of reply sometimes used, remarks Benedict XIV.,

\* *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione.*

in cases where it is wished to convey to the Postulators that it would be better if they abstained from petitions which, from their involving many difficult questions, render a reply in the negative probable.

On the petition being still urged, the Sacred Congregation, whether because they judged that the time had not yet come for a decision, or that the difficulties had not been satisfactorily solved, replied, on the 30th of July, 1729, simply *Negative*.

The Postulators, however, still far from discouraged, prepared fresh remarks to be submitted to the Sacred Congregation, in which they endeavoured to show that the Cause did not really depend on the decision of the philosophical question, and at the same time procured fervent prayers to be offered that the Feast might be celebrated throughout the whole Church.

The objection drawn from the novelty of the Devotion had been already answered. If the Devotion be regarded as consisting in the interior worship paid to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the writings of the Saints sufficiently show that it is not new. If it be regarded as a public worship paid to the Sacred Heart, and presenting certain definite practices of piety, then it is new. But the objection in this sense would tell with equal force against every devotion practised in the Church, for at one time each was new.

As regards the objection that the institution of the Feast would open the way to demands for an endless variety of Feasts in honour of each portion of our Lord's sacred Body, this had been already sufficiently answered by Father Galliffet.

For it is unquestioned that, amongst all nations and

by all mankind, the heart is regarded as holding the noblest place in the body. A Sovereign wishing to leave with his country the most precious memorial of himself, would bequeath his heart.

Though, indeed, there is not a portion of our Lord's sacred Body which is not, by reason of its hypostatic union with the Person of the Eternal Word, worthy of infinite honour. And we have but to think of the sacred Hands, Feet, Eyes, of our Divine Lord to understand what a depth of reason is contained in the thought of them for giving the homage of our hearts to each of them in particular.

This is most true as regards acts of interior homage and love paid to them, but when there is question of exterior and public worship paid by the Church, other considerations enter in. And, in the first place, to sanction such a worship it is necessary that Almighty God should Himself make known His will, either by private revelation, by miracles, or by a general impulse given to the hearts of the Faithful, as the history of the Church tells us He has always done in similar cases.

When there is question of the introduction of a new devotion into the Church, it must always be borne in mind that this does not depend on man, and cannot be a human work, but is wholly the work of God. It is God alone Who can change the hearts of men, and Who raises up in His Church new devotions, as He sees His own glory or the wants of the Faithful require.

Benedict XIII. having died in 1730, the Cause was again brought forward under the Pontificate of Clement XIII., at the instance of most of the Bishops of Poland, and of the Archconfraternity of the Sacred

Heart in Rome. The Sacred Congregation of Rites, "being full well assured," as is expressed in the Decree of 1665, "that the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was now extended through nearly every part of the Catholic world, under the favour of their Bishops, and enriched by the Holy See with many thousand Briefs of indulgences given to almost innumerable Confraternities erected under the title of the Sacred Heart of Jesus," granted a proper Office and Mass of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the kingdom of Poland and the Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart in Rome.

This favour was extended, at their earnest petition, to the Religious of the Visitation. The proper Office and Mass was granted, by a Decree of July 10, 1765, to the whole Order, with the rite of a *duplex majus*, on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi.

The example of the Visitation was followed with alacrity by numerous dioceses and most Religious Orders, so that the Sacred Congregation was able to say in 1856 that "the Faithful everywhere had felt so ardently urged to recal the memory of the infinite charity of this Divine Heart that at that time there was hardly a single Church which did not rejoice in having obtained from the Apostolic See the privilege of celebrating the Feast."

Yet it is remarkable that the Holy See, notwithstanding the favour with which it recorded the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, had always up to the year 1856 refused to listen to the petitions of those who begged to have it extended to the whole world.

Some have considered this as an indication of the finger of God, and have regarded the marvellous alacrity

with which the Devotion was taken up by the Faithful throughout the world as presenting even a stronger proof of its divine character than if the Holy See, by its own authority, had given a formal approbation for the celebration of the Feast through the whole Church.

It was the consideration of the joyful reception of the Feast by the Faithful throughout the whole world that moved his present Holiness, Pius IX., at the petition of the Bishops of France, to extend, by a Decree dated August 23, 1856, the celebration of the Feast to the whole world, with the Mass *Miserebitur* as a *duplex majus*, on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi.

His Holiness crowned this confirmation of the Feast by the Beatification, on the 19th of August, 1864, of Blessed Margaret Mary. "To this end," said the Postulator of the Cause, "was this highest honour bestowed by the Holy See on Sister Margaret Mary, in order that the Faithful might find in the record of her wonderful actions a most fitting school for their instruction, and fresh incitement to tend with greater ease and alacrity to the practice of divine charity, seeing what a return of love she made to Almighty God, Who, in the language of St. Chrysostom, 'wishes to be served rather by love than fear.'"

The triumph of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart over the bitter hostility to which it has been exposed presents of itself a most convincing proof of its divine origin.

The first concession of the Feast in 1765, under Clement XIII., was the signal for every effort of virulent animosity on the part of its opponents. From that date

their attacks under Clement XIII. and XIV. tended, together with the destruction of the Society of Jesus, to the extinction of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the abolition of the Feast from the calendar. So true was the Society of Jesus to its glorious mission of upholding the Devotion that its very existence was identified with the Cause, and the continuance of the one was regarded as the security for the revival of the other. "There is good reason to suspect," say the Acts of the Congregation of Florence, "that the Order of the Jesuits looks forward to reuniting its scattered members under the standard of the Heart of Jesus."\*

Scipio de Ricci, Bishop of Pistoia, published in 1781 his notorious Pastoral, in which he gave public expression to his hostility to the Holy See, and was followed by other Jansenist Bishops in his attacks upon the Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

By his partisans in Naples books upon the Sacred Heart were forbidden, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart was removed in several instances from the calendars. At Genoa all works on the Sacred Heart were proscribed by the civil authorities; at Verona the Confraternities of the Sacred Heart were abolished.

After this bitter war had been thus carried on in Italy for thirty years, its abettors were doomed to see all their labours frustrated by the publication of the Constitution of Pope Pius VI., *Auctorem Fidei*, "dictated," says the illustrious Cardinal Gerdil, "by Divine Wisdom Itself for the glory of the Church and the salvation of the people." By it the Devotion to the Sacred Heart was maintained in all its integrity against

\* *Acta Congreg. Florentin.*, 1787, vol. i., p. 15.

the attacks of its opponents, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart triumphed in Italy.

In the Austrian dominions the opponents of the Sacred Heart had recourse to stratagem to gain their ends, and professed to defend the true sense of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. To this end they introduced into Germany the Jansenist works published in Italy. But they called in also to their aid the secular arm. They obtained a Decree on the subject from Joseph II., dated Feb. 20, 1782 ; they endeavoured to have it enacted that all employed in public offices should be bound to join in a league to destroy the "Jesuitical Devotion," as they styled it, that all pictures of the Sacred Heart should be removed from Churches, and that the public Academic Professors should ridicule in every way the Devotion. The Feast of the Sacred Heart was expunged from every calendar, its Confraternities were abolished, and in Vienna persons convicted of having taken means to promote the Devotion were heavily fined and even imprisoned.

These attempts, however, were all in vain. The Devotion to the Sacred Heart had taken too deep a root in the hearts of the Faithful to be eradicated. They had recourse to it in their difficulties, and consecrated themselves publicly to it. The Tyrolese especially obtained permission by imperial Decree to celebrate the Feast every year in their churches with unusual splendour. Others followed their example, and in 1856 the Austrian dominions formed no exception to what was said by the Sacred Congregation of Rites of the whole Catholic world, that "at that time there was hardly a single diocese which had not received with joy.

from the Apostolic See the privilege of celebrating the Feast."

It remains to say a few words respecting the true nature and distinctive character of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, as far as it can be gathered from the language of the Church in the approbation of the Feast.

The Object, then, of the Devotion, appears to be twofold, the one spiritual, the other material or sensible. The spiritual Object is the infinite charity of our Divine Lord; the material or sensible Object is His true and real Heart, Which is at the same time the Symbol of His infinite charity. Both are truly the Object of the Devotion, but the spiritual is the primary Object; the material, though worthy of infinite honour on account of Its hypostatic union with the Eternal Word, takes Its place as an Object of the Feast on account of Its natural connection with the spiritual Object or the infinite charity of our Divine Lord.

Such is the language of Pope Pius VI., in his Letter to Scipio de Ricci, Bishop of Pistoia, dated June 30, 1781. "The substance of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus consists in calling to mind and venerating the unbounded charity and excessive love of our Divine Redeemer under the symbol of His Heart."

"The principal Object of this Devotion," said the Postulator of the Cause under Pope Innocent XII., "is the unbounded love of the Son of God."

"The immediate Object in other devotions," argued Father Galliffet, when Postulator of the Cause under Benedict XIII., "as, for example, of the Passion, the Wounds, &c., is not properly the love of Christ; but in the Feast of the Heart of Jesus, the love with which



the Sacred Heart is inflamed is the immediate Object of the Feast, yet not apart from the Heart Itself."

The same is also established in the disputation held by the Apostolic Master of Ceremonies before the Sacred Congregation, on the 11th of August, 1860. Speaking of the points of difference between the Feast of Corpus Christi and that of the Sacred Heart, "Though both," he says, "are Feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet they commemorate different mysteries. The one regards the real presence of the Body of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, the other the mystery of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ symbolically expressed by His material Heart." He shows, also, that the Devotion to the Sacred Heart regards especially the Passion and Death of our Divine Lord as proofs of His infinite love, and that they are distinctly commemorated in the Mass and Office for the Feast.\*

As the Advocates of the Cause have always held this language, so the Sovereign Pontiffs in their grants have always set before the Faithful the love of our Divine Lord as the primary Object of the Devotion, and urged them to respond to this love by their devotion to His Sacred Heart.

Thus Clement XIII., when he granted permission for the Feast, expressed his wish that the Faithful, in celebrating the Feast, should "call to mind the principal benefits received from His charity,"† that charity which

\* In the Invitatory: "Christum pro nobis passum venite adoremus;" and in the Response at Prime: "Qui passus es pro nobis," and also in the Preface, which is that of the Cross.

† "Præcipua ejus charitatis beneficia recolerent."

He showed especially "in taking our nature, in suffering and dying for the redemption of mankind, and in instituting, in commemoration of His Death, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood."\*

So also Pius VI., in three Briefs which are contained in the *Bullarium Romanum*, declared that he wished, in extending the Feast, "that the remembrance and veneration of the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ, endured with so great love for the redemption of mankind, might be daily increased, and that the Faithful might entertain greater devotion and love for the Passion of our Lord." In his Letter, also, to the Bishop of Pistoia, as we have seen, he says that the substance of the Devotion consists in the thought and veneration of the unbounded love of our Divine Redeemer under the symbol of His Sacred Heart.

The same also is the language of Pope Pius VII. But we find no clearer proofs than in the language of his present Holiness Pius IX. Thus, in the Decree of the 23rd of August, 1856, he declares that he had extended the Feast to the whole Church because "he wished to give fresh incitement to the Faithful to love, make a return of love, and embrace His wounded Heart, Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His Blood." And again, in the words of the Decree of the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, it is declared that this was the object of the institution of the Devotion—"In order that He might the more enkindle this fire of charity, He wished that the veneration and worship of His most Sacred Heart should be established and promoted in His Church."

\* Decree, Feb. 11, 1765.

In the Roman breviary, in the Office for Blessed Margaret Mary, we are presented with an account of the apparition of our Blessed Lord to her, in which He showed her His Sacred Heart in His open Breast, burning with flames and encircled with thorns, and enjoined her, "in return for His love and to repair the injuries and ingratitude of men, to procure the establishment of a Feast in honour of His Heart."

It is thus we see that the Sovereign Pontiffs, in general in their Constitutions are at pains to set before the Faithful the infinite love of God as the principal Object of the Devotion, in order to enkindle in their hearts a greater love of Jesus Christ; and our Holy Father, his present Holiness, in granting the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, has proposed in her an example to show how our Lord may be loved, and a model, also, by which the Faithful might form themselves in this school of divine love.

The material or sensible Object of the Devotion is the true and living Heart of our Lord. This we learn, says Father Galliffet, in the work which he presented to His Holiness Pope Benedict XIII., from the words of the revelation in which our Divine Lord Himself, in establishing the Devotion, made known His will to Blessed Margaret Mary. Disclosing to her His Sacred Heart, "See this Heart," He said, "Which burns with such love for men that It has omitted nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, to show to them Its love." "It is evident, then," says Father Galliffet, "that our Lord here speaks of His Heart, not in a figurative, but in a true and real sense, as It is a part of His Sacred Body." The same, also,

is the line of argument advanced by the Postulator of the Cause under Pope Clement XIII.

The reason why the Sacred Heart should have been proposed as an Object, had been given by the Postulator of the Cause, in 1697, under Pope Innocent XII., drawn from the necessity felt by our nature for some sensible object in the exercise of devotion ; nor could any more suitable object be found to awaken divine love in our hearts than the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord.

It was declared by Pope Pius VI., against the Jansenists, in his Bull *Auctorem Fidei*, that the true and real physical Heart of our Divine Lord is an Object of this Devotion, united inseparably to the Person of the Eternal Word.

The infinite dignity, also, of this material Object is at the same time established by this Bull, wherein it is declared that "the Sacred Heart of Jesus is to be adored with supreme worship, as it is the Heart of Jesus, that is to say, the Heart of the Person of the Word, to Which It is inseparably united." It is, also, most suited, as has been said, to enkindle a love of our Lord, as It is, at the same, a Symbol of His infinite love.

The sensible Object in this, as in all other devotion, gives its name to the Feast. In the Feast of Corpus Christi, it is the ineffable Mystery of the Blessed Sacrament which constitutes the spiritual Object ; the sensible Object is the Sacred Body of our Blessed Lord, and it is from this that it takes its name of the Feast of Corpus Christi. In the Feast of the Sacred Heart, it is the infinite charity of our Divine Lord towards ungrateful man which is the

spiritual Object ; the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord, the Symbol of His love, is the sensible Object, and it is from this that the Feast is called the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

From the consideration of this twofold Object flow naturally those exercises of love which go to constitute in general the end of the Devotion. The thought of the infinite love of our Divine Lord gives rise to the desire to make a return of love ; the sight of the Sacred Heart of our Lord, so infinite in dignity and overflowing with all perfections, awakens a desire to render It every homage ; and the reflection that this infinite love has met with such a return arouses a feeling of grief and sorrow, and a desire to make reparation for such injuries, especially as regards the Sacrament of Love, the Blessed Eucharist. We are presented by the Church with an example of the exercise of this perfect love in the model which it has proposed to us in the life of Blessed Margaret Mary.

## A P P E N D I X.

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### DECREE OF BEATIFICATION.

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PIUS IX. POPE.

FOR THE PERPETUAL MEMORY OF THE THING.

JESUS, the author and finisher of our faith, Who, led by His exceeding charity, having taken upon Himself the weakness of our mortal nature, offered Himself unspotted unto God upon the altar of the Cross, in order to free us from the most hateful slavery of sin, desired nothing so much as to enkindle, by every means, in the souls of men, that charity with which His Heart was consumed, as we know from the Gospel He declared to His Disciples—"I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?"

In order the more to enkindle this fire of charity, He would have the adoration and worship of His most Sacred Heart established and propagated in the Church. For who, indeed, is there so hard-hearted and unfeeling as not to be moved to make a return of love to that amiable Heart Which was pierced and wounded with the lance, in order that our souls might find therein a hiding-place as it were, and secure retreat, to which we might betake ourselves in safety from the attacks and snares of our enemies? Who would not be provoked to show every mark of love and honour to that most Sacred Heart, from the Wound of Which flowed forth water and blood, the source of our life and salvation?

In order to establish and spread far and wide amongst mankind this so saving a Devotion, and one so justly due from us, our Saviour vouchsafed to choose His servant, the Venerable Margaret Mary de Alacoque, a Religious of the Order of the Visitation of

the Blessed Virgin Mary, who by her innocence of life and constant practice of every virtue, proved herself worthy, with the aid of divine grace, of this exalted office and charge.

Born of a good family in the town of Lauthecourt, in the diocese of Autun, in France, she manifested from her very infancy a docility, regularity, and gravity beyond her years, so as to give her parents unmistakable tokens of what she would be in after life. When still quite a child, she showed a distaste for all the little gratifications which are so commonly attractive to children, and repaired to the more retired rooms of the house, where she might with her whole soul worship and adore God. As she grew older, she shunned the company of others, and delighted in nothing so much as in constantly visiting churches, and there prolonging her prayers for several hours. She consecrated her virginity to God from her tender years, and began to afflict her body with fasts, disciplines, and other austerities, that she might thus hedge in, as it were, with thorns, and guard the flower of her virginity.

She presented also a striking example of meekness and humility. For, when her father was dead, and her mother worn out by age and severe sickness, she was treated with such harshness and severity by those who had care of the house, as often to want even what was necessary for food and clothing. Yet she bore meekly this cruelty and injustice for several years, setting before her eyes the example of the sufferings of Christ.

When she was nine years of age she approached the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time, and drew from this heavenly banquet such an ardent charity that the divine fire shone forth from her countenance and eyes.

Inflamed with a like charity towards her neighbour, she deeply grieved at the sad state of so many children, who were almost abandoned by their parents, and were growing up in vice and ignorance of what regarded their eternal salvation; she accordingly instructed them with much patience in the mysteries of faith, trained them to virtue, and was even wont to deprive herself of a considerable portion of her daily sustenance to feed them.

Having chosen for herself a Heavenly Spouse, she steadfastly refused her mother's offer of the hand of a person of wealth and distinction; and the better to ensure her fidelity, which she had pledged to her Heavenly Spouse, she thought of entering an Order of cloistered Nuns. After having weighed the matter long and seriously with herself, and consulted the divine will with earnest prayer, she was admitted, in the twenty-third year of her

age, among the Sisters of the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the town of Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Autun.

Having shown herself in her Noviceship such as her excellent disposition for virtue and the innocence of her past life had betokened, she deserved to be admitted to pronounce her solemn vows. After pronouncing them, she appeared now to press forward with redoubled speed towards the perfection of Religious life, so bright a pattern of all virtues did she exhibit to her Sisters in Religion. There shone forth in her a wonderful humility, an extraordinary readiness in obeying, and patience in enduring troubles of every kind, a most exact observance of even the least Rules, a constant severity in afflicting her body, uninterrupted prayer, to which whilst she devoted herself day and night, rapt often in ecstasy, the gifts of divine grace were most plenteously showered upon her. In meditating on the sufferings of Christ our Lord, she was penetrated with sentiments of such deep compassion, and inflamed with so ardent a love, that she commonly appeared to be almost in a swoon.

In course of time, when by her distinguished virtue she had gained the admiration of all her Sisters, she was placed over the young persons who were engaged in their Noviceship, that she might train and form them to Religious life; and for this office no one could have been found better suited than the Venerable Margaret Mary, since by her own example she animated and encouraged the young maidens entrusted to her care and guidance to enter upon and run on in the way of perfection.

It was now as she was praying with fervour before the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, that Christ our Lord intimated to her that it would be most pleasing to Him if the worship of His most Sacred Heart, burning with love for mankind, were established, and He wished the charge of this to be consigned to her. The humility of the Venerable servant of God was greatly alarmed, as she deemed herself unworthy of such an office; nevertheless, that she might comply with the will of Heaven and satisfy her desire of enkindling divine love in the hearts of men, she earnestly exerted herself both amongst the Religious of her own convent, and also, as far as she could, amongst all in general, to induce them to show every mark of honour, worship, and reverence towards the most Sacred Heart, the seat of divine charity.

Many and severe were the troubles which the Venerable servant of God had, on this account, to endure, and very many difficulties to surmount; she never, however, lost courage; and, relying on



the hope of the assistance of Heaven, she applied herself with such labour and perseverance to promote this Devotion, that by the favour of divine grace it has increased and spread far and wide throughout the Church, with great fruit to souls.

At length, desiring to be dissolved, that she might take flight to the heavenly nuptials of the Lamb, for which she so earnestly sighed, and wasted, not so much by disease, as by the fire of charity, she departed this life on the 17th of October, in the year 1690.

The opinion which had prevailed of the Venerable Margaret Mary's sanctity became more general after her death, especially when confirmed by repeated miracles which were said to have been wrought through the intercession of the Venerable servant of God. In consequence, in the year 1715, the Bishop of Autun lost no time in procuring documents relating to her life and virtues, to be drawn up in the usual form. But the serious political disturbances, which shook nearly the whole of Europe at the close of the eighteenth century, prevented the Cause from being carried before the Holy See. As soon, however, as the furious civil tempest was calmed, petition was made for the decision of the Apostolic See, and an inquiry into the virtues by which the Venerable Margaret Mary had been distinguished, in the Assembly of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, presiding over the Congregation of Rites. After all the circumstances had been long and carefully weighed, We at length declared by a Decree, published on the 23rd of August, in the year 1866, that they had reached a heroic degree.

Afterwards in the Assembly of Cardinals was proposed a discussion concerning the miracles by which the sanctity of the Venerable Margaret was said to have been confirmed by Heaven, and when, after a rigorous examination, they had been approved of both by the Consultors and the Cardinals, We, having first implored the aid of divine light, pronounced an affirmative sentence regarding the truth of the same miracles, on the 24th day of April of the present year, 1864.

It only remained that the same Cardinals should be asked whether it were safe to proceed to the solemn Beatification of the Venerable Margaret, and, being assembled in Our presence on the 14th of June of the present year, they answered with one voice that it was safe to proceed.

We, accordingly, having implored the divine assistance, as was fitting in a matter of such importance, decreed, on the 24th of June in the same year, that since it seemed good to Us, the honours of

the Blessed, with all the usual privileges, might safely be paid to the Venerable servant of God, until such time as her Canonisation should be solemnised.

We, therefore, moved by the prayers of nearly all the Bishops of France, as also by those of the Religious of the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the counsel and assent of Our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, presiding over the Congregation of Rites, grant permission by Our Apostolic Authority that the same Venerable servant of God, Margaret Mary de Alacoque be styled in future by the name of Blessed, and that her body and relics be presented to the veneration of the Faithful, so that they be not carried in solemn processions; moreover, by the same Our Authority, we grant that the Office and Mass of the Common of Virgins, with proper prayers approved by Us, according to the rubrics of the Roman missal and breviary, be said in her honour. But we only allow the celebration of Mass and recitation of Office on the 17th of October, in the diocese of Autun, and in all the churches throughout the world belonging to those Houses in which the Religious Order of Nuns of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is found instituted. The aforesaid permission extends to all the Faithful, secular and regular, who are bound to the recitation of the Canonical Hours, and, as regards Masses, to all Priests that resort to churches in which the Feast is celebrated. In fine, We grant that within the first year after the date of these present letters, the solemnity of the Beatification of the Venerable servant of God Margaret Mary de Alacoque be celebrated in the dioceses and churches above mentioned with Office and Masses with the rank of a greater double; and We order this celebration to take place on a day to be appointed by the Ordinaries, after the same solemnity has been celebrated in the Vatican Basilica. Any Apostolical Constitutions and Ordinations whatsoever, and any other documents to the contrary notwithstanding.

We will, moreover, that the same regard be paid to the printed copies also of these Letters, provided they be signed by the hand of the Secretary of the aforesaid Congregation of Sacred Rites, and confirmed by the seal of the Prefect, as would be paid to the manifestation of Our will expressed by these present Letters.

Given at Castel Gandolpho, under the Seal of the Fisherman, on the 29th day of the month of August, in the year 1864, the nineteenth year of Our Pontificate.

N. CARD. PARACCIANI CLARELLI.

## PIUS PP. IX.

## AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.

AUCTOR nostrae fidei et consummator Jesus, qui nimia ductus charitate, naturae mortalis infirmitate assumpta, obtulit se in ara Crucis immaculatum Deo, ut nos a peccati teterrima servitute liberaret, nihil potius habuit, quam ut flammam charitatis, qua Cor Ejus ureretur, in hominum animis modis omnibus excitaret, quemadmodum suis adseruisse discipulis novimus ex Evangelio “ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?” Hunc vero charitatis ignem ut magis incenderet, sanctissimi Sui Cordis venerationem cultumque institui in Ecclesia voluit, ac promoveri. Ecquis enim tam durus ac ferreus sit quin moveatur ad redamandum Cor illud suavissimum idcirco transfixum ac vulneratum lancea, ut animus ibi noster quoddam quasi latibulum, ac perfugium habeat, quo se ab hostium incursione insidiisque recipiat, ac tueatur? Ecquis non provocetur ad prosequendum omni observantiae studio Cor illud sacratissimum, cujus ex vulnere aqua, et sanguis, fons scilicet nostrae vitae, ac salutis effluxit? Jamvero ad tam salutarem, ac debitum pietatis cultum instituendum, lateque inter homines propagandum cligere Servator Noster dignatus est Venerabilem Famulam suam Margaritam Mariam de Alacoque religiosam sororem ex ordine Visitationis Beatae Mariae Virginis, quae quidem et innocentia vitae et assidua virtutum omnium exercitatione tanto officio ac muneri, divina adjuvante gratia se dignam probavit. Haec enim vero in oppido, cui nomen Lauthecourt, intra fines Dioecesis Augustodunensis in Gallia honesto genere orta jam inde a pueritia ingenium docile prae se tulit, moresque probos, et supra aetatem compositos, sic ut qualis esset futura, certis indiciis parentes ominarentur. Etenim adhuc puella ab oblectamentis, quibus illa aetatula capi solet, abhorrens, secretiora petebat domus cubicula, ubi intenta mente Deum coleret ac veneraretur, adolescentior autem frequentiam hominum devitans nihil magis habebat in deliciis, quam versari in templis assidue, precesque ad plures horas producere. Virginitatem emissio voto primis ab annis Deo consecravit, atque adeo jejuniis, flagellis, aliisque asperitatibus adfligere corpus instituit, ut iisdem quibusdam quasi spinis virginitatis florem septum custodiret. Mansuetudinis porro, atque humilitatis illustre documentum exhibuit. Etenim demortuo patre, matre vero tum aetate, tum gravi morbo confecta, ab iis, qui rei domesticae curationem gerebant, sic dure atque aspere habita est,

ut rebus etiam ad victum cultumque necessariis plerumque careret. Atqui tantam inclementiam atque injuriam, proposito sibi Christi patientis exemplo, complures annos aequo animo tulit. Novem annos nata ad Sanctissimum Eucharistiae Sacramentum suscipiendum primum accessit, acque ex coelesti dape tantum concepit charitatis ardorem, ut ignis ille divinus ex ejus ore, acque oculis emicaret. Pari erga proximum charitate incensa, graviter dolebat miseram puerorum turbam fere a parentibus derelictam vitiis succrescere rerum ad salutem aeternam pertinentium ignaram, idcirco eos patienter erudiebat mysteriis fidei, ad virtutem informabat, et vero etiam non modicam quotidiani cibatus partem eisdem alendis detrahare sibi consueverat. Quum caelestem sibi Sponsum delegisset, exhibitas a matre nuptias licet opulentas atque illustres constanter recusavit, et quo datam coelesti eidem sponso fidem praestaret securius, de ingrediendo sacrarum virginum claustro cogitavit. Qua de re posteaquam diu multumque secum deliberasset, fuisque precibus Divinam consulisset voluntatem, annum agens aetatis suae vicesimum tertium, in civitate, cui nomen Paray le Monial, intra fines Augustodunensis Dioecesis religiosis sororibus ex Ordine Visitationis Beatae Mariae Virginis adscita est. In tyrocinio quum se talem probasset, qualem et egregia ad virtutem indoles, et innocenter acta vita portenderat, ad solemnia nuncupanda vota admitti promeruit. Quibus quidem nuncupatis videri coepit ad religiosae disciplinae perfectionem concitato cursu contendere; adeo sodalibus suis Deo dicatis virtutum omnium exemplar enituit. Mira quippe in ipsa elucebat humilitas, singularis et in obtemperando alacritas, et in quibusvis molestiis perferendis patientia, accuratissima legum vel minimarum observantia, in afflicto corpore assidua austeritas, numquam intermissum precationis studium, cui dies noctesque quum instaret, alienato saepe a sensibus animo, divinae gratiae donis uberrime perfundebatur. In recolendis autem Christi Domini cruciatibus tanto afficiebatur doloris sensu, tantaque inardescebat amoris flamma, ut prope exanimis plerumque languesceret. Porro quum ob virtutis praestantiam omnium sibi sodalium admirationem conciliasset, puellis, quae in tyrocinio versarentur, ad religiosam vitam exercendis, informandisque praeposita fuit, eique muneri nulla potuisset aptior inveniri, quam Venerabilis Margarita Maria, utpote quae commissas suae fidei ac magisterio puellas ad ingrediendum atque excurrendum perfectionis iter erigeret, ac confirmaret exemplo suo. Jam vero ante augustissimum Eucharistiae Sacramentum eidem fervidius oranti significatum est a Christo Domino, gratissimum sibi fore si cultus institueretur sacratissimi

Sui Cordis humanum erga genus charitatis igne flagrantis, ac velle Se hujus rei curam ipsi demandatam. Qua erat humilitate cohorruit Venerabilis Dei Famula, tanto se officio indignam existimans; sed tamen ut supernae obsequeretur voluntati, utque desiderio suo faceret satis divinum amorem in hominum animis excitandi, studiose egit tum apud religiosas sui Coenobii sorores, tum vero etiam apud omnes, quoad potuit, homines, ut Cor illud Sanctissimum divinae charitatis sedem omni honoris significatione colerent ac venerarentur. Multae idcirco et graves Venerabili Dei Famulae tolerandae fuerunt molestiae, plurimae superandae difficultates, numquam tamen ipsa dejecit animum, et spe subnixa coelestis auxilii tam operose ac constanter promovere institit id genus pietatis, ut divina favente gratia, non sine magno animarum fructu in Ecclesia auctum longe sit ac propagatum. Denique dissolvi cupiens, ut ad coelestes agni nuptias, quas tantopere deperibat, advolaret, non tam morbo, quam flamma charitatis absumpta diem obiit supremum decimo sexto kalendas Novembris Anno MDCLXXX. Quae de Venerabilis Margaritae Mariae sanctitate invaluerat opinio percrebuit magis postquam ipsa e vivis excessit, accedente praesertim prodigiorum celebritate, quae Venerabili Dei Famula deprecante ferebantur contigisse. Quapropter anno MDCCXV. Augustodunensis Antistes de illius vita et moribus opportunas de more tabulas condendas curavit. Verumtamen ne ad Sanctae Sedis iudicium deferri causa posset gravissimi rerum publicarum motus effecerunt, qui exeunte saeculo decimo octavo universam fere Europam perturbarunt. Sedata tamen turbulentissima procella temporum postulatum est Apostolicae Sedis iudicium, et apud Consilium S. R. Ecclesiae Cardinalium sacris ritibus tuendis praepositorum instituta de virtutibus quaestione, quibus Venerabilis Margarita inclaruisset, rebus omnibus diu multumque ponderatis, Nos tandem heroicum illas attigisse gradum ediximus decreto evulgato decimo kalendas Septembris Anno MDCCCXLVI. Exinde in eodem Cardinalium Consilio proposita disceptatio est de miraculis, quibus Venerabilis Margaritae sanctitas comprobata divinitus diceretur, ac postquam severo habito examine tum a Consultoribus, tum a Cardinalibus illa fuissent probata, Nos implorato antea superni luminis auxilio, de eorundem miraculorum veritate affirmativam evulgavimus sententiam die octavo kalendas Majas anni vertentis MDCCCLXIV. Illud unum supererat, ut iidem interrogarentur Cardinales num procedi tuto posset ad Beatorum Coelitum honores Venerabili Margaritae tribuendos, iidemque coram Nobis coacti decimo octavo kalendas Julii vertentis anni procedi tuto posse unanimi

suffragio responderunt. Nos porro, ut in tanta re, coelestem opem adprecari die octavo kalendas Julii Anni ejusdem decrevimus deferri tuto posse, quum Nobis visum esset, Venerabili Servae Dei Beatorum honores cum omnibus indultis, donec sollemnis Ejusdem canonizatio celebretur. Nos igitur permoti precibus omnium ferme Sacrorum Galliae Antistitum, nec non religiosorum sororum Ordinis Visitationis B. Mariae Virginis, de consilio et assensu Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S. R. Ecclesiae Cardinalium sacris ritibus cognoscendis praepositorum auctoritate Nostra Apostolica facultatem impertimur ut eadem Venerabilis Dei Famula Margarita Maria de Alacoque Beatae nomine in posterum nuncupetur, ejusque corpus et reliquiae, non tamen in solemnibus supplicationibus deferendae, publicae fidelium venerationi proponantur. Praeterea eadem auctoritate concedimus, ut de illa recitetur officium et missa de communi Virginum cum orationibus propriis a Nobis approbatis juxta rubricas missalis et breviarii Romani. Ejusmodi vero missae celebrationem, et officii recitationem fieri dumtaxat concedimus in Dioecesi Augustodunensi, ac in templis omnibus domorum ubicumque existentium, in quibus institutus reperitur religiosus ordo monialium Visitationis B. Mariae Virginis, die XVII Octobris ab omnibus christifidelibus tam saecularibus, quam regularibus, qui horas canonicas recitare teneantur, et quantum ad missas attinet ab omnibus Sacerdotibus ad templa, in quibus festum celebratur, confluentibus. Denique concedimus, ut anno a datis hisce Litteris primo Solemnia beatificationis Venerabilis Servae Dei Margaritae Mariae de Alacoque in Dioecesi, atque in Templis, de quibus habita mentio est, celebrentur cum officio, et missis duplicis majoris ritus, idque fieri praecipimus die per Ordinarios indicenda, ac posteaquam eadem solemnia in Basilica Vaticana celebrata sint. Non obstantibus Constitutionibus, et Ordinationibus Apostolicis, ceterisque contrariis quibuscumque. Volumus autem ut harum Litterarum exemplis etiam impressis, dummodo manu Secretarii praedictae Congregationis sacrorum rituum subscripta sint, et sigillo Praefecti munita, eadem prorsus fides habeatur, quae Nostrae voluntatis significationi hisce ostensis Litteris haberetur. Datum ex Arce Gandulphi sub Annulo Piscatoris die XIX Mensis Augusti Anno MDCCCLXIV. Pontificatus Nostri Anno Decimonono.

N. CARD. PARACCIANI CLARELLI.

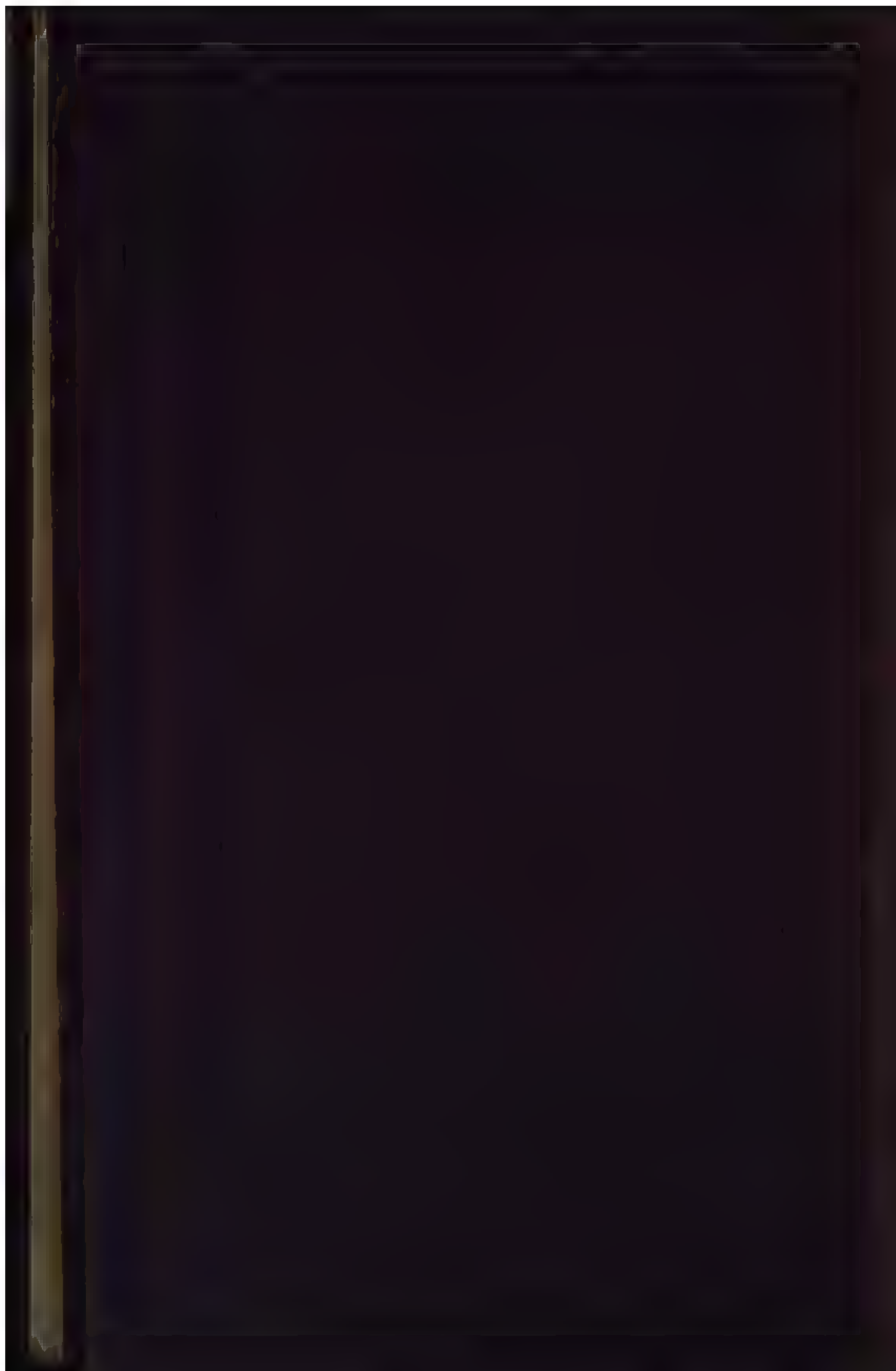






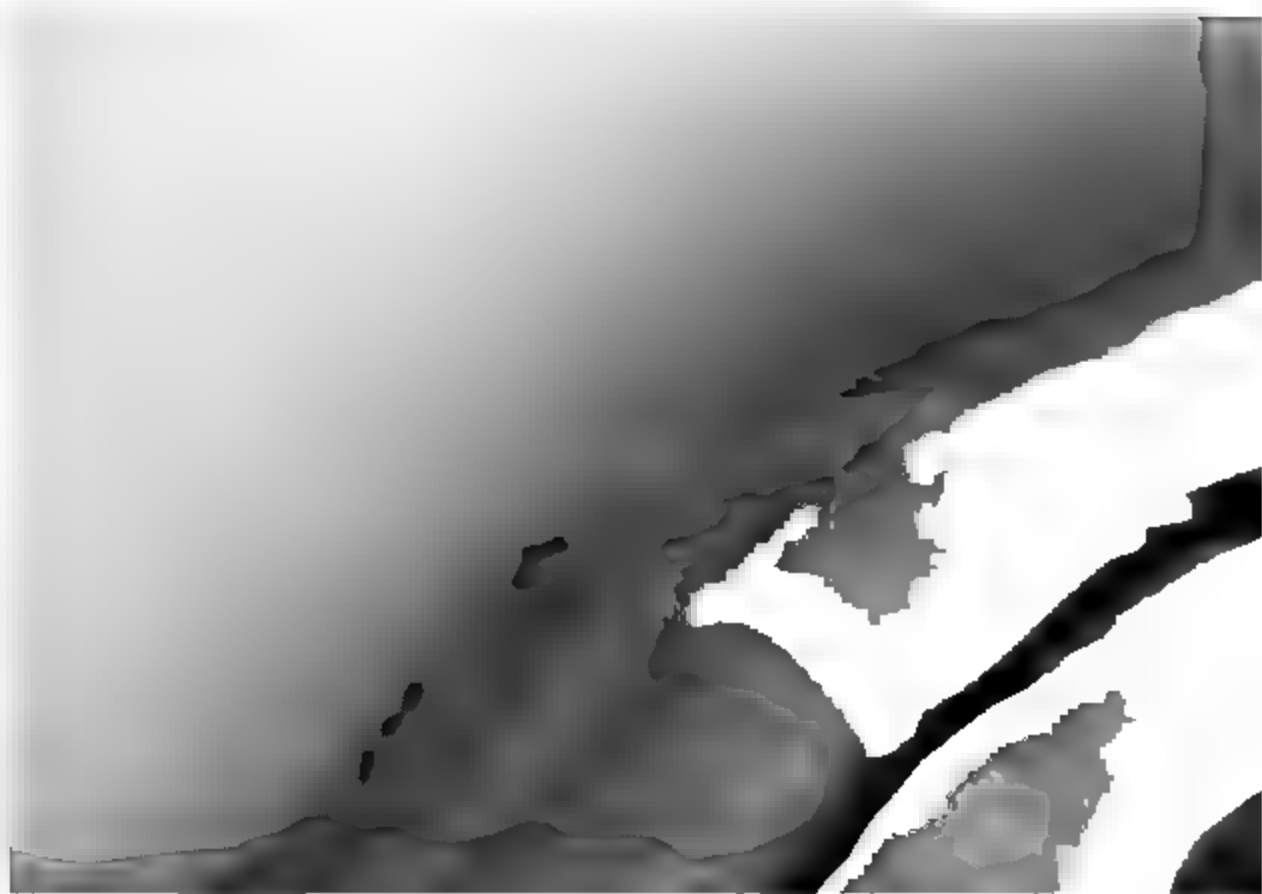








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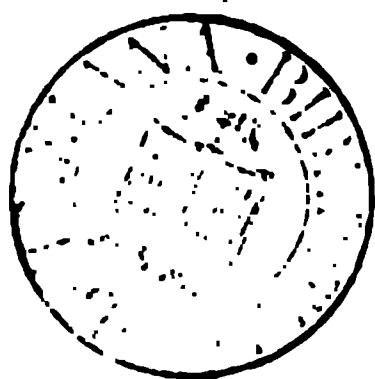














# JEAN CALAS

## ET SA FAMILLE

ÉTUDE HISTORIQUE D'APRÈS LES DOCUMENTS ORIGINAUX

SUIVIE

DE PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES

ET DES LETTRES DE LA SŒUR A.-J. FRAISSE  
DE LA VISITATION

PAR

ATHANASE COQUEREL FILS



SECONDE ÉDITION

REFAITES SUR DE NOUVEAUX DOCUMENTS

PARIS

LIBRAIRIE DE JOËL CHÉRBULIEZ

33, RUE DE SEINE, 33

1869

Tous droits réservés

210. j. 19.

tion ultra-catholique de notre temps, se prononce de plus en plus pour les juges et contre la victime. A Toulouse, des passions locales n'ont jamais cessé de donner à ce débat, sans cesse repris, un caractère d'amertume. A Paris, les journaux *l'Univers* et le *Correspondant* se sont empressés de communiquer à leurs lecteurs la nouvelle justification des arrêts du Parlement et des Capitouls.

On va jusqu'à prétendre que le rôle de Voltaire, dans ce procès dont il a fait l'entretien de l'Europe entière, bien loin d'être glorieux pour lui, n'est qu'un exemple de sa légèreté et de sa mauvaise foi, et ne vaut pas mieux que ses sarcasmes contre le christianisme ou ses écrits licencieux.

De ces attaques nombreuses et réitérées, il est résulté une impression générale d'incertitude. Pour bien des esprits, la question est devenue douteuse et elle exige un plus ample informé.

Il nous paraît convenable de répondre à ce désir, et le moment est propice. Évidemment on a repris intérêt à ce procès ; les écrits que nous citerons le prouvent. Il existe d'ailleurs, sur cette affaire et sur les hommes qu'elle met en scène, des renseignements inédits, importants et nombreux, dont l'usage, qui eût été indiscret jusqu'à nos jours, n'a plus d'inconvénients. Quelques-unes de ces pièces se trouvaient entre mes mains, et j'ai été amené peu à peu à en réunir beaucoup d'autres. J'ai voulu ne laisser échapper aucun rayon de lumière et ne rien dire que sur preuves authentiques. Je crois donc devoir, avant tout, rendre ici un compte précis des sources où j'ai puisé et des garanties de suffisante information que peut offrir ce travail.

C'est de la famille même du condamné qu'étaient venus jusqu'à moi les premiers documents. La plus jeune

des filles de Jean Calas est morte à Paris sous la Restauration, veuve du pasteur Duvoisin, chapelain de l'Ambassade de Hollande à Paris.

Elle avait remis ses papiers de famille au dernier successeur de son mari, M. Marron, qui était devenu pasteur de l'Église réformée de Paris quand le culte protestant fut réorganisé par le premier consul. M. Marron laissa ces documents à mon oncle Charles Coquerel, auteur de l'*Histoire des Églises du Désert*, où le malheur des Calas est raconté. C'est de lui-même que je les tiens, et il m'a plus d'une fois recommandé de faire paraître les *Lettres adressées par la Sœur A. J. Fraisse à Mme Duvoisin*, si jamais ce grand procès, considéré longtemps comme définitivement jugé et gagné, occupait de nouveau l'attention. Peu de semaines avant sa mort, en m'indiquant ses dernières volontés au sujet des papiers qu'il me léguait, il me fit promettre de publier un jour cette correspondance.

Quand je vis reparaître, il y a trois ans, le nom de Calas dans des brochures et des journaux hostiles à sa mémoire, je compris que le moment venait de payer cette dette, sacrée pour moi. Je croyais m'en acquitter en me faisant simplement l'éditeur des *Lettres* de la religieuse. J'étais vivement exhorté à les publier, par un ou deux excellents juges qui les avaient lues et qui se trouvaient sous le charme de cette parole à la fois naïve, touchante et spirituelle, de ces sentiments pieux, si équitables et si élevés. Je pensais qu'il suffirait de mettre une courte notice en tête de cette correspondance et je m'occupai d'en réunir les matériaux.

Je découvris alors, à ma grande surprise, que la question avait été débattue plus récemment que je ne le savais et presque toujours dans un sens hostile aux Calas. Je rencontrai des assertions étranges à contrôler,

des calomnies à confondre, des méprises funestes à démêler.

Je ne crains nullement d'avouer qu'en lisant des récits inexacts, de maladroites défenses, il y eut un moment où moi-même j'hésitai, où je sentis que ma conviction manquait de base. Dès lors, je n'avais qu'un parti à prendre, celui de l'examen le plus sérieux et le plus détaillé. Quel qu'en fût le résultat, j'aurais cru devoir publier les lettres de la sœur Anne-Julie, comme un exemple édifiant de tolérance et d'impartialité, comme une œuvre touchante et digne d'être conservée. De plus, il y avait, en tout cas, à signaler l'extrême ignorance des juges de Toulouse, imaginant de bonne foi que le meurtre des enfants par leurs pères, pour cause de conversion au catholicisme, était commandé par Luther, par Calvin, et généralement pratiqué parmi les protestants. Quant aux Calas, pour peu que leur innocence m'eût paru douteuse, le rôle de leur défenseur ne me convenait en rien.

Il fallut donc essayer celui de juge d'instruction, ou plutôt de simple narrateur, et je ne l'eus pas longtemps entrepris que je vis clairement combien les modernes accusateurs avaient méconnu ou altéré les faits les mieux prouvés. D'un autre côté, il faut bien le reconnaître, les défenseurs de Calas ont souvent mal servi sa mémoire ; la plupart des écrits qui le réhabilitent sont entachés de partialité ; ceux de Voltaire pèchent quelquefois par la légèreté, et les Mémoires des trois avocats de Paris par la déclamation : les livres de Court de Gébelin, de d'Aldeguier et autres sont rarement exempts de passion, et l'on regrette chez presque tous le manque de précision, d'exactitude et de critique.

Au milieu de ce chaos, où se choquaient pêle-mêle

une centaine d'écrits pour ou contre, il y avait un seul parti à prendre : ne consulter les auteurs modernes, les avocats et Voltaire le premier, qu'à titre de renseignements, remonter aux sources originales et ne juger que sur des témoignages contemporains, solidement établis.

Dès lors, c'est aux *Archives de l'État* qu'il fallait surtout recourir. Il s'y trouve des documents de trois ordres différents et d'une importance décisive. C'est d'abord le procès, qui n'existe tout entier que là<sup>1</sup>. Lorsque le Grand Conseil cassa les sentences rendues à Toulouse en première instance par les Capitouls, et en appel par le Parlement, il ordonna que des copies certifiées de toute la procédure fussent envoyées aux nouveaux juges. Malgré la mauvaise grâce et les délais considérables qu'y mit le Parlement, il finit par obéir, et tous ces documents, vérifiés sous ses yeux, furent transmis par lui-même au tribunal des Maîtres des Requêtes. On y joignit plus tard les pièces, non moins importantes, que produisirent les Calas pour obtenir la sentence du Conseil et enfin tous les actes de la dernière information, faite à Paris par Dupleix de Bacquencourt.

Il était nécessaire, une fois familiarisé avec toute cette procédure, d'aller à Toulouse pour pouvoir comparer avec la collection Parisienne celle qu'on y garde dans les archives du Palais de Justice. Elle se compose des originaux, tandis que celle de Paris ne contient que des copies, mais certifiées par les mêmes autorités. D'un autre côté, elle est beaucoup moins complète, et cela sous un double rapport. La collection de la procédure toulousaine a été longtemps égarée à l'époque de la Révolution, et quelques feuilles n'ont pas été retrou-

1. Section judiciaire 8. 2009.

vées ou se sont perdues plus tard<sup>1</sup>. De plus, elle ne comprend naturellement que la double information des Capitouls et du Parlement; celle de Paris seule a pu se grossir des pièces du troisième et du quatrième procès devant le Grand Conseil et devant les Maîtres des Requêtes. Or, nous montrerons que devant les deux tribunaux de Toulouse le procès fut conduit de telle sorte qu'il ne parvint à eux que des témoignages tous défavorables (sauf un seul), et que les dépositions, les arguments, les faits justificatifs, tout ce qui pouvait servir les accusés ne parut que devant les juges de Versailles et de Paris. Aussi n'y a-t-il rien d'étonnant à ce que la plupart des personnes qui ont vu seulement les pièces toulousaines croient les Calas coupables; si ces mêmes personnes lisaient les documents moins volumineux et tout différents, des deux dernières instructions, elles porteraient peut-être un jugement tout opposé. Il n'appartient qu'à des esprits éminents et très-exercés, comme l'ancien procureur général de Toulouse, aujourd'hui conseiller à la Cour de Cassation, M. Plougoum, de découvrir, dans les pièces mêmes sur lesquelles Calas a été condamné à Toulouse, la pleine certitude de son innocence.

Une seconde série de renseignements d'une haute valeur se trouve à Paris aux Archives; ce sont les mi-

1. Il y a cependant à Toulouse quelques pièces accessoires qu'on ne possède pas à Paris, et dont je me suis empressé de prendre connaissance. Ce sont : la Consultation demandée par le Procureur du Roi Charles Lagane à un théologien de l'ordre de Saint-Dominique, le Père Bourgis (voir p. 155); trois arrêtés rendus contre le procureur Duroux fils, et un autre, prononcé dans l'affaire de l'assesseur Monyer (p. 120); enfin un arrêt très-long et très-circonstancié qui établit, après le supplice de Calas, les droits des créanciers de sa succession; et quelques autres documents sur ce règlement d'intérêts. — Ces pièces se trouvent dans la copie que nous désignerons sous le nom de feu M. Gastamhide.



notes des dépêches dictées de 1761 à 1766 par le comte de Saint-Florentin, secrétaire d'État<sup>1</sup>. Nous donnons, à la suite de notre travail, un choix de ses lettres, et nous en citerons beaucoup d'autres, soit dans le cours même de notre discussion, soit dans les notes placées à la fin du volume. On y verra que ce ministre dirigea secrètement et approuva tout ce qui eut lieu.

Nous publions en même temps plusieurs lettres adressées de Toulouse à M. de Saint-Florentin par les juges de Calas ou par d'autres personnages influents de l'époque, et qui se trouvent dans une autre section de ces mêmes Archives<sup>2</sup>. Placées ainsi en regard les unes des autres, les nouvelles que reçoit le ministre et les instructions qu'il donne s'éclairent mutuellement d'une vive lumière et fournissent de précieux éléments au jugement qu'il s'agit d'établir.

Ces quatre séries officielles, dont trois à Paris et une à Toulouse, sont complétées par une suite de dix-sept pièces qui émanent de M. de Saint-Priest, intendant du Languedoc, en résidence à Montpellier, et d'Amblard, son subdélégué à Toulouse. J'en dois la communication à M. Benoît, professeur à la Faculté de médecine, qui a eu l'extrême obligeance de répondre à ma demande en copiant lui-même ces dépêches sur les originaux, avec une exactitude rigoureuse jusqu'à en respecter l'orthographe vieillie. C'est, du reste, une garantie de précision et de correction que nous avons tenu à donner partout où nous l'avons pu<sup>3</sup>.

1. Dépêches du Secrétariat (série E. 8522 et suiv.)

2. Section historique 1818. Dossier de 19 pièces.

3. Archives de la préfecture de l'Hérault. (Liasse série C, n° 279. Dossier : *Affaire Calas*). M. Rathery a bien voulu me faire savoir qu'une copie de ces pièces a été communiquée à l'Académie de législation de Toulouse par M. Belhomme, archiviste du Languedoc. Cette

J'ai reçu de mon ami M. Charles Read divers documents recueillis par la *Société d'Histoire du Protestantisme français* et d'autres qu'il a rassemblés lui-même. Je citerai parmi les premiers quelques lettres inédites, provenant de l'ancienne collection Lajariette à Nantes, et copiées dans cette ville par M. le pasteur Vaugiraud ; parmi les derniers, plusieurs actes de l'état civil relevés par M. Read, à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris, sur les registres de la chapelle de l'ambassadeur de Hollande et ceux du cimetière des protestants avant la Révolution.

Après les dépôts publics, il fallait consulter les papiers de famille. Avec les Calas un jeune homme, Gaubert Lavaysse, avait été impliqué dans ce terrible procès, du 13 octobre 1761 au 9 mars 1765. Une de ses sœurs, qui épousa l'écrivain La Beaumelle, avait réuni en trois volumes in-8° une collection très-intéressante de pièces relatives à cette affaire, contenant des mémoires imprimés, des lettres inédites, des articles de journaux copiés par elle et jusqu'aux épigrammes, aux petits vers de l'époque. Employé avec discrétion et critique, un pareil recueil était un trésor inappréciable. Ces volumes, conservés d'abord au château de la Nogarède, près de Mazières (Ariège), par Mme Gleizes, fille de La Beaumelle, se trouvent, depuis la mort de cette dernière, au château de Lavelanet (Haute-Garonne), en la possession de sa belle-sœur Mme Auguste Gleizes de Caffarelli<sup>1</sup>. Malgré les scrupules et l'hésitation bien naturelle qu'éprouvait Mme Aug. Gleizes à se séparer

Compagnie a fait déposer les documents qui lui étaient adressés dans ses archives (Recueil de l'Académie de législation de Toulouse, t. IV, p. 195, mai 1855). — Ce sont ces mêmes lettres que M. Salva a publiées depuis, les croyant moins connues qu'elles ne l'étaient.

1. — Mme veuve Gleizes, née Jenny de Caffarelli, est décédée au château de Lavelanet le 16 février 1869, à l'âge de 73 ans.

de ces précieux volumes, elle m'a fait l'honneur de me les envoyer à Paris et de les laisser longtemps entre mes mains. Je ne puis trop lui en témoigner ici ma respectueuse gratitude.

La Beaumelle prit une part active à la défense de la famille accusée. Il s'était même procuré une copie légalisée de la plupart des actes de la procédure toulousaine. Un autre membre de sa famille, son neveu, M. Maurice Angliviel, ancien bibliothécaire au dépôt de la Marine, héritier de tous ses manuscrits, a bien voulu me les faire connaître et me fournir, en outre, nombre de renseignements utiles.

M. Léonce Destremx, arrière-neveu de Cazeing qui partagea un moment la captivité des Calas, a retrouvé au château de Saint-Christol trois lettres de Mme Calas et de sa fille Nanette à Cazeing, et d'autres papiers de famille qu'il a bien voulu m'envoyer. Je dois également à M. Charles Meynier, de Nîmes, deux lettres de Jean Calas.

A la Bibliothèque du Louvre, j'ai reçu les plus gracieux encouragements de M. Barbier, qui porte avec distinction un nom illustré par son père dans la science bibliographique et qui m'a initié, non-seulement aux richesses du dépôt public qui lui est confié, mais encore à d'autres qui lui appartiennent en propre. La bibliothèque considérable et toute spéciale réunie par M. Beuchot, son beau-père, et qui lui a servi pour son édition de Voltaire, m'a été ouverte, ainsi que les notes manuscrites qu'il a laissées. J'y ai trouvé soit en indications, soit en livres, des ressources que j'avais cherchées vainement partout ailleurs.

Il ne suffisait pas d'explorer les diverses Bibliothèques de Paris; j'ai visité en 1850 celle de Genève, dont le directeur, feu M. Privat, était d'une famille alliée à

celle des Calas et s'est empressé de faciliter et d'éclairer mes recherches. Plus tard M. Gaberel, ancien pasteur, auteur d'une *Histoire de l'Église de Genève*, d'un ouvrage intitulé *Voltaire et les Genevois*, etc., a pris la peine de copier dans le dépôt de l'État civil, quelques renseignements qui m'étaient nécessaires.

J'ai trouvé aussi à Londres, dans le *British Museum*, quelques notes utiles.

Mais nulle part à l'étranger je n'ai reçu autant de secours qu'en Hollande, où un ancien et vénérable ami de mon père, M. L.-C. Luzac, *Curateur de l'Université de Leyde*, ancien ministre de l'instruction publique et de l'intérieur, a bien voulu mettre à contribution pour ce travail sa vaste bibliothèque, me communiquer deux lettres inédites de Voltaire, ainsi que d'autres pièces tirées de sa riche collection d'autographes, et enfin faire prendre, pour mon livre, à la Haye, des informations et des copies dans les Archives de l'État.

On peut juger, d'après ces détails, qu'il n'aurait pas été difficile de publier tout un volume de documents sur les Calas et leur procès. (Depuis la publication du livre, d'autres communications m'ont été faites en grand nombre.) J'ai cru que cette surabondance de preuves laisserait l'attention, et que ma tâche devait être d'éviter au lecteur le travail et les longueurs d'un examen si minutieux, en le faisant d'avance, et en mettant au jour, avec le résultat de ces investigations, l'élite des pièces justificatives.

J'ai cru devoir aussi dresser, sous le titre de Bibliographie, la liste la plus complète qu'il m'a été possible, des imprimés qui ont paru en diverses langues sur l'affaire Calas. Cette liste, plus que triple de celle qu'a donnée M. Beuchot, s'est encore enrichie. Je ne prétends

nullement affirmer qu'elle soit complète, surtout pour les publications en langue allemande, anglaise ou hollandaise; mais j'ose dire que je n'ai rien épargné pour la compléter.

Ces nombreux écrits, je dois le faire remarquer, ou se répètent les uns les autres, ou n'embrassent qu'un côté du sujet. Quelques-uns même en font une véritable légende, embellie partout de détails fabuleux et semée d'anecdotes à effet. On n'avait pas encore essayé de contrôler au moyen des manuscrits les renseignements qu'ils contiennent, pour résumer, dans un récit détaillé, tout ce qu'ils ont de certain.

Bientôt, en puisant à ces sources diverses, la parfaite innocence des Calas et l'erreur déplorable où sont tombés leurs juges devinrent évidentes pour moi. C'est aux Archives, parmi les actes du quadruple procès, que cette vérité m'est apparue dans tout son éclat, et depuis, à chaque pas, ce travail m'en a fourni des preuves nouvelles. Je me suis appliqué à en rendre compte avec une sincérité absolue, sans m'étayer de ces arguments faibles qui ne font jamais que compromettre les forts, sans taire ce qu'il y avait à faire valoir contre ma propre opinion, et en faisant la part, aussi exacte que j'ai pu, du bien et du mal.

Ainsi, l'on a fait du Capitoul David un traître de mélodrame. Je l'ai peint, non d'après des conjectures, mais par ses propres lettres, par celles du ministre son instigateur, son complice et plus tard son juge. Louis Calas a été représenté par Court de Gébelin et d'autres comme dénaturé et lâche à un degré vraiment monstrueux. J'ai fait voir par les faits, qu'il était sans cesse flottant, maîtrisé par ses amis et surtout cupide. Je n'ai voulu faire ni de Calas ni de sa veuve un type idéal et accompli; je les donne tels qu'ils se montrent. L'his-

toire, et surtout quand elle est biographique et individuelle, doit se garder de ces enthousiasmes mal fondés qui couronnent un héros d'une auréole trop sainte pour son front et le transfigurent au lieu de le peindre. Les protestants ne doivent canoniser personne, pas même un martyr.

Ce dernier mot m'amène à dire à quel point de vue religieux je me suis placé. Il est essentiel de le déclarer. On aurait tort de chercher ici, ou d'y redouter, ni un plaidoyer ni un pamphlet, pour ou contre le catholicisme, pour ou contre Voltaire ou l'Église réformée de France. C'est un simple chapitre d'histoire, et rien de plus. Il est vrai que dans cette histoire l'Église romaine, celle du Désert et l'école de Voltaire, sont toutes trois en action. J'ai rendu justice à chacune selon mes lumières, et avec une intention d'équité très-sérieuse et très-soutenue.

J'ai blâmé sans hésiter les préventions populaires des catholiques de Toulouse, leur étrange ignorance au sujet des protestants, l'intervention de l'Église, de ses rites et de ses corporations dans un procès où la religion avait trop de part. Mais quand j'ai rencontré sur mon chemin la vénérable et touchante figure de la vieille Visitandine, c'est avec respect et sympathie que j'ai fait connaître ses sentiments si élevés, ses actes si délicats. La reconnaissant, malgré son caractère conventuel que je suis très-loin d'aimer, comme une bonne chrétienne marquée du double sceau de la vraie charité et d'une piété sincère. Et en disant ces choses comme je le sens, chaleureusement et avec franchise, je n'ai nullement l'intention de faire l'éloge ni même l'apologie des couvents; je remplis simplement le devoir d'un honnête homme en présence de ce qui est moralement bon et beau.

Quant à Voltaire, ai-je besoin de dire que l'éclat prodigieux de ses talents ne voile en rien à mes yeux ce qu'il y eut de coupable dans la légèreté ignorante, la mauvaise foi, le cynisme impie avec lesquels il a parlé des choses les plus saintes et outragé à plaisir toute foi et toute pudeur? Personne ne déplore plus que moi l'éternelle confusion que faisait sans cesse cet ancien élève des Jésuites, entre des abus détestables qu'il avait mille fois raison de dénoncer, de combattre à outrance, et les vérités religieuses ou morales qu'il enveloppait dans les mêmes dérisions. Il est le plus coupable de ces grands écrivains français qui ont abusé de l'esprit pour tout railler, tout flétrir; sous ce rapport, le mal qu'il a fait à la France est incalculable. Mais quelque énormes que soient ses torts (et je les tiens pour tels), je dois dire bien haut, que ses efforts infatigables en faveur de la famille Calas, sans lesquels l'heure de la réhabilitation n'aurait jamais sonné pour elle, furent un exemple admirable de dévouement à l'humanité, à la tolérance et à la justice. C'est par de pareils actes de gouvernement moral qu'on fait avancer le monde, et au milieu de ses chefs-d'œuvre, il a eu raison de dire en songeant aux Calas et à d'autres :

J'ai fait un peu de bien; c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.

Voltaire a régné sur son siècle, et souvent pour le pervertir; mais quand il s'est servi de son immense pouvoir pour propager de grands et immortels principes, qui lui venaient, à son insu, de l'Évangile; quand, non content de les avoir proclamés, il les a pratiqués lui-même et les a fait pratiquer autour et au-dessus de lui, une profonde reconnaissance lui est due. La lui refuser serait à mes yeux une preuve d'étroitesse ingrate et inique.

Si j'aime les humbles vertus de la religieuse, si je loue le zèle humain de l'incrédule, je n'ai pas moins le droit de faire admirer chez Calas un héroïsme dont la simplicité ne doit pas faire méconnaître la grandeur ; chez sa veuve, la fermeté d'âme des matrones antiques, profondément pénétrée et attendrie par la foi chrétienne ; chez Paul Rabaut et dans la part hardie qu'il prit à cette tragique histoire, l'intrépide dévouement d'un champion de l'Évangile qui, sous le coup d'une condamnation à mort, continue cinquante ans, sans orgueil ni faiblesse, son périlleux ministère, ne s'irrite jamais contre ses persécuteurs, et n'a qu'un seul jour de colère dans sa vie, celui où l'Église qu'il sert est accusée d'un fanatisme atroce et dénaturé. Sous l'ignoble règne de Louis XV, de pareils hommes sont l'honneur de leur pays, en même temps que la gloire de leur communion. Héritier de leur foi, j'ai été heureux de leur rendre hommage ; mais j'ai résisté à l'entraînement de mon admiration.

En résumé, j'ai cherché, dans ce livre, à traiter chacun selon ce qui lui est dû, avec une justice qui a pu quelquefois être sévère, mais qui n'est jamais malveillante. La règle de mon travail a été cette maxime excellente, citée souvent et rarement pratiquée : *Suum cuique*.

ATH. C. F.

Novembre 1867.





# AVERTISSEMENT

## SUR CETTE ÉDITION

Depuis que ce livre a paru, la question qu'il traite a été de nouveau débattue. Une réfutation de notre travail a été publiée à Toulouse par un chanoine honoraire de cette ville, petit-neveu du Capitoul Boyer dont le vote décisif prévalut contre Calas (*Histoire du procès de Jean Calas à Toulouse*, par M. l'abbé Salvan). En outre, l'ouvrage d'un autre descendant des juges de Toulouse, M. le vicomte de Bastard d'Estang, *les Parlements de France*, a paru, et comme nous l'avions annoncé, l'auteur se prononce pour la culpabilité de la famille accusée.

Il m'a semblé, sinon très-nécessaire, au moins convenable de répondre à ces nouveaux réquisitoires, qui sont des symptômes remarquables, soit de la persistance des familles parlementaires de Toulouse dans les errements de leurs aïeux, soit de la réaction ultra-

montaine à laquelle nous assistons. D'ailleurs, le volume de M. Salvan m'a été utile à double titre, parce qu'il contenait quelques pièces ou lettres du temps que je ne connaissais qu'en partie.

Trois personnes, compétentes à des titres divers, M. Charles Berryat-Saint-Prix, conseiller à la Cour de Paris, M. Maurice Angliviel, neveu de la Beaumelle, possesseur de ses papiers, et M. Moquin-Tandon, de l'Institut, ont bien voulu me donner chacun, par écrit, une série de notes sur la première édition de ce livre.

De nouvelles informations, en grand nombre, m'ont permis aussi d'ouvrir une nouvelle enquête sur ce mémorable procès. Non-seulement plusieurs personnes m'ont fait l'honneur d'enrichir de divers documents isolés mon trésor déjà considérable de pièces authentiques, mais une source très-riche de renseignements originaux m'a été ouverte avec la plus parfaite obligeance. M. Fournier, ministre de France à Stockholm, possédait dans son château de la Touraine, une malle remplie des papiers de Mme Calas, qui avaient appartenu après elle à son dernier descendant en France, Alexandre Duvoisin-Calas. Il s'y trouve treize lettres de Voltaire, inédites en grande partie.

Une gracieuse et active intervention m'ayant mis en relation avec M. Fournier, il a bien voulu autoriser non-seulement de nombreux extraits faits pour moi dans sa collection par des mains amies, mais plus tard la communication de cette riche collection tout entière ;

j'écris avec ces nouveaux documents originaux sous mes yeux. J'exprime ici à M. Fournier une très-vive gratitude.

J'ai dû à la même intervention, toujours zélée pour le bien et le vrai, le prêt d'un beau volume in-4°, qui contient la copie admirablement exécutée des principales pièces de la procédure toulousaine, fait sur les originaux et une série de quatorze lettres échangées entre l'intendant Saint-Priest, et son subdélégué à Toulouse, M. Amblard.

Sur la première page de ce recueil on lit ces mots :

Juin 1861.

*Le procureur général de la Cour impériale,*

*Signé : E. GASTAMBIDE.*

« Le présent volume de la procédure Calas a été copié textuellement sur le volume qui se trouve dans la Bibliothèque de la Cour impériale. — Il n'existe aujourd'hui que trois exemplaires de cet ouvrage; le premier appartient au parquet de la cour de Toulouse; le deuxième à M. Gastambide, conseiller à la Cour de cassation, ancien procureur général à Toulouse; le troisième à la Société des livres religieux de Toulouse. 25 décembre 1864. »

L'exemplaire qu'on a bien voulu me confier a été offert par M. Courtois de Viçoze à la Bibliothèque de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français et, selon l'intention du donataire, remis à M. Fernand Schickler, président de cette Société, après avoir servi à la présente révision de notre ouvrage. Ce précieux recueil reste donc à l'avenir accessible aux personnes studieuses

qui voudraient examiner de plus près les dépositions des témoins<sup>1</sup>.

Quelques mots encore sur cette étude historique.

On m'a blâmé d'interrompre trop souvent mon récit, même aux moments les plus émouvants, pour relever telle ou telle circonstance significative, discuter une assertion, préciser un détail, ce qui, dit-on, nuit à l'intérêt *dramatique* du récit. Mais je n'ai nullement cherché à exciter les passions. Après les déclamations brillantes et pathétiques de Voltaire ou des *avocats*, après les drames de Chénier ou de Ducange, ce qu'il faut au lecteur, ce ne sont ni des phrases, ni des effets de théâtre, mais des faits solidement établis par une critique sans passion et sans distraction, toujours en éveil et toujours impartiale.

Dès le jour où j'ai entrepris cette tâche, j'ai essayé de suppléer par un travail assidu à tout ce qui me manquait en fait de science du droit; aujourd'hui, en publiant cette édition, revue, je crois devoir, non à moi-même, mais aux vénérables clients dont je me suis fait l'avocat, de déclarer que ce volume a été examiné, soit publiquement par M. Duverdy, dans la *Gazette des Tribunaux*, soit par de savants magistrats, tels que M. Berryat-Saint-Prix, à Paris, feu M. Drion, président du tribunal de Schlestadt, auteur d'excellents ouvrages his-

1. Disons cependant que la procédure de cassation et ce qui concerne la réhabilitation des condamnés y est réduit à quatre ou cinq pages insignifiantes. Ce sont seulement les deux procès de Toulouse devant les Capitouls et le Parlement, que cette copie reproduit.

toriques, et enfin par mon éminent ami M. Jalabert, doyen de la Faculté de droit de Nancy, qui, en me donnant d'excellents conseils dont je me suis empressé de profiter, ont bien voulu contrôler, au point de vue de la jurisprudence, l'exactitude de mes recherches <sup>1</sup>.

1. Si ce que j'ai dit ici de Voltaire en 1858 (p. XIII) n'est que juste, on a eu tort de se scandaliser, en 1867, de voir le nom d'un biographe de Calas, parmi ceux des membres de la commission qui érige une statue, par souscription publique, au défenseur de Calas et de tant d'autres innocents injustement persécutés. Si cependant, aux yeux de quelqu'un de mes lecteurs, ma participation à cet acte de gratitude et de justice avait encore besoin d'apologie après tout ce qu'on va lire, je le renverrais à ce que j'en ai dit dans mes *Libres Études*, p. 356, sous le titre de *La Statue de Voltaire*.

Rien ne me confirme plus entièrement dans mon opinion sur Voltaire que l'aveugle haine que certaines personnes lui ont vouée. M. Salvan, chanoine de Toulouse, lisant sa lettre pleine d'émotion sur la réhabilitation des Calas, enfin obtenue par lui après trois ans d'incessants efforts, s'oublie jusqu'à le traiter de *pantin* ! (p. 125). Ailleurs il écrit ces lignes calomnieuses : « Voltaire ne reconnaît que deux divinités sur la terre auxquelles il sacrifiait tous les jours : ses talents et son argent. Croyait-il Calas innocent, le croyait-il coupable ? On n'en sait vraiment rien ! » (p. 120). Ce n'est ni à Voltaire, ni à l'influence de son nom que peut nuire une si choquante injustice.





# JEAN CALAS

## ET SA FAMILLE

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### INTRODUCTION

#### COUP D'ŒIL SUR L'HISTOIRE RELIGIEUSE DE TOULOUSE <sup>1</sup>

*Non alibi in hæreses armantur severius leges.... quò  
fit ut una inter Galliæ urbes immunis sit hæretica  
labe, nemine in civem admissio cujus suspecta sit apo-  
stolica fides.*

G.-B. de GRAMOND,  
*Premier Président au Parlement de Toulouse.*  
(*Hist. Galliæ, lib. 30. — 1643.*)

Nulle part les lois ne sont armées de plus de rigueur  
contre l'hérésie ; d'où résulte que, seule entre les villes  
de France, Toulouse est pure de la souillure hérétique,  
nul n'y étant admis à la bourgeoisie si sa foi catholique  
est suspecte.

Dans la dernière moitié du dix-huitième siècle, la  
population presque entière d'une grande ville de France  
et ses magistrats de tout ordre furent convaincus qu'un  
père de famille avait étranglé un de ses fils pour l'em-  
pêcher d'entrer dans l'Église Romaine, et qu'en com-  
mettant ce crime atroce, il n'avait fait qu'obéir à une  
loi établie parmi les protestants, ouvertement promul-

1. — I. *Annales* (inédites) des *Capitouls* (Aux archives de la ville). —  
II. *Histoire de Vigilance, esclave, prêtre et réformateur des Pyrénées au*

guée par Calvin dans son *Institution chrétienne*, et régulièrement observée au sein de l'Église Réformée. Calas est mort victime de cette monstrueuse erreur, qui, chez presque tous, était sincère et qui non-seulement fut admise, publiée, affichée, plaidée, prêchée, accueillie à cette époque par les tribunaux et par le Parlement lui-même, mais qui, aujourd'hui encore, est considérée à Toulouse comme une vérité par un certain nombre de personnes dans toutes les classes et a été soutenue récemment par plusieurs écrivains<sup>1</sup>.

Nous ne croyons nullement avoir à réfuter une opinion si absurde et qui suppose une si profonde ignorance historique; mais il nous paraît indispensable de rappeler les principaux antécédents religieux d'une ville où des préventions aussi singulières existent encore, et où elles ont causé en d'autres temps les plus grands malheurs. C'est, d'ailleurs, une histoire tout exceptionnelle que celle d'une ville française, contre laquelle trois croisades ont été non-seulement prêchées, mais exécutées, et qui a vu naître dans son sein les confréries de pénitents et l'inquisition elle-même. Il est impossible de juger l'état des esprits à Toulouse avant la Révolution française, d'après les sentiments et les idées qui régnaient ailleurs.

Cette capitale du Languedoc avait été, de très-bonne

*cinquième siècle*, par Napoléon Peyrat, 1 vol. in-12. — III. *Histoire et Doctrine des Cathares ou Albigeois*, par Ch. Schmidt, 2 vol. in-8°. — IV. *Les Toulousaines*, par Court de Gebelin, un vol. in-12. — V. *Histoire de Toulouse*, par d'Aldeguier, 4 vol. in-8°. — VI. *Histoire des institutions religieuses, politiques, judiciaires et littéraires de la ville de Toulouse*, par le chevalier du Mège, 4 vol. in-8°. — VII. *Histoire du Languedoc*, par Dom Claude de Vic et Dom Vayssette, continuée par le chevalier du Mège, 10 vol. in-8°. — VIII. *Biographie Toulousaine*, par une société de gens de lettres, 2 vol. in-8°. — IX. *Histoire de la délivrance de Toulouse*, arrivée le 27 mai 1562. Toulouse. 1762 et Amsterdam, 1765, in-8°. — X. *Pièces historiques relatives aux guerres de religion de Toulouse*, in-12. Toulouse, 1862, in-12. — XI. *Le massacre de Toulouse*, d'après les documents contemporains. Paris, 1862, in-8°.

1. Voir notre chapitre xiv, *Histoire de l'opinion publique en France au sujet des Calas*.



heure et par excellence, une ville lettrée, spirituelle, savante, où la pensée était indépendante, la parole hardie, la chanson souvent caustique et incisive <sup>1</sup>.

On ne saurait dire quand a commencé, dans ses murs, la lutte des croyances. La France méridionale a toujours été un foyer d'opposition au catholicisme, un champ de bataille où l'hérésie et l'orthodoxie de Rome n'ont jamais cessé d'être en présence. L'antique civilisation gréco-romaine y avait de profondes racines<sup>2</sup>, dont les derniers vestiges ne sont pas encore effacés. Quand l'autorité du clergé catholique s'établit en France, elle trouva, dans le Midi, l'esprit public beaucoup plus éclairé et plus vivant que dans le Nord, très-peu disposé à subir le joug, et toujours enclin à s'en affranchir. Aussi, toute une série de sectes sans cesse renaissantes apparurent successivement dans une vaste région qui comprend les Alpes, les Cévennes, les Pyrénées et s'étend de Lyon et de Bordeaux à la Méditerranée.

On a remarqué que Vigilance, ce prêtre du cinquième siècle qui peut être considéré comme le premier des Réformateurs, et qui s'éleva contre les honneurs excessifs rendus aux saints et aux reliques, contre le célibat et les jeûnes, était né à Calagoris ou Caligurris dans le pays de Comminges, près de Cazères (Haute-Garonne). *O crime*, s'écrie saint Jérôme dans ses lettres contre Vigilance, *des Evêques sont les complices de sa scélératesse !* C'était surtout l'évêque de Toulouse, Exsupère, qu'il at-

1. Dans deux de ses ouvrages, Augustin Thierry a constaté la prééminence intellectuelle où s'était élevée cette ville dès l'époque romaine et qu'elle sut augmenter sous les Visigoths : « Toulouse, avec ses consuls auxquels on donnait vulgairement le nom plus ancien de Capitouls, fut l'une des cités municipales qui eurent le plus de grandeur et d'éclat. » (*Tableau de l'ancienne France municipale.*)

« La cour des rois Visigoths à Toulouse, centre de la politique de tout l'Occident, intermédiaire entre la cour impériale et les royaumes germaniques, égalait en politesse et surpassait peut-être en dignité celle de Constantinople. » (*Lettres sur l'Histoire de France*, 1. 6.)

2. Martial, Ausone, Sidoine Apollinaire, désignent Toulouse comme la cité *Palladienne*. Saint Jérôme l'appelle la *Rome de la Garonne*.

taquait ainsi; ce fut lui qu'il accusa ailleurs *d'acquiescer aux fureurs* de ce prêtre dans son propre diocèse<sup>1</sup>. Ces vives agressions, il faut le dire, eurent un plein succès; Exsupère finit par se prononcer contre Vigilance et contre ses réformes; il fut canonisé après sa mort, et ses reliques, jointes à celles de saint Sernin, sont peut-être aujourd'hui celles que Toulouse entoure de la plus profonde vénération.

Deux siècles plus tard, Sérénus, évêque de Marseille, brisa les images que le peuple adorait. Au cinquième et au sixième siècle, l'Arianisme fut dans l'Aquitaine la religion dominante et ne cessa de prévaloir dans la Narbonnaise, même après la conversion au catholicisme du roi Récarède. Toulouse devint ensuite le foyer principal de l'hérésie Cathare, qui prit dans le midi de la France son nom géographique d'*Albigeoise*. Vers 1022, plusieurs adeptes de cette doctrine y furent punis du dernier supplice; ainsi commença cette longue liste d'hérétiques mis à mort dans Toulouse, qui ne fut close qu'au bout de sept siècles et demi, en l'année 1762, par les noms de cinq victimes dont la dernière fut Jean Calas.

Il y avait eu un moment, à l'époque de Charlemagne, où trois évêques, Claude à Turin, Félix à Urgel, Élipand à Tolède avaient travaillé à délivrer l'Église des innovations qui surchargeaient son culte. Au douzième siècle, pendant qu'Arnauld de Brescia protestait en Italie contre l'Église, les prédications anti-catholiques de Pierre de Bruys et de son disciple Henri eurent un grand succès dans le pays Toulousain, sinon dans la ville même où prévalait le Catharisme, et fondèrent une secte qui, sans tomber dans les erreurs dualistes des Cathares, attaquait Rome au nom de la Bible seule. Saint Bernard a raconté lui-même que, venant en 1147 avec le cardinal d'Ostie, légat d'Eugène III, combattre ces sectes, il trouva

1. *Ad Riparium.*

hostiles à l'Église un certain nombre de seigneurs qui n'appartenaient à aucune d'entre elles, et Alphonse, comte de Toulouse, à leur tête.

Bientôt s'organisa dans cette ville riche et puissante une véritable révolte contre Rome<sup>1</sup>. Des bourgeois, arrivés à l'opulence par le commerce et l'industrie, rivalisaient avec les seigneurs, étaient poètes comme eux, et comme eux se faisaient bâtir, mais dans l'intérieur de la cité, des châteaux flanqués de tours. Lorsque, vers 1170, naquit à Lyon l'Église vaudoise, elle se propagea rapidement dans le midi de la France et attira bien des personnes que choquait le dualisme oriental des Albigeois. Déjà, en 1163, les *Hérétiques de Toulouse* préoccupaient très-sérieusement le concile de Tours. Un peu plus tard, Pierre Morand, l'un des principaux bourgeois de la ville, tenait dans sa maison, ou plutôt dans son château fort, des réunions de culte, et le peuple enthousiaste le surnommait *Jean l'Évangéliste*.

En 1177, le comte Raymond V se déclara pour l'Église Romaine et demanda des secours contre l'hérésie au pape, aux rois de France et d'Angleterre. La lutte s'établit entre le comte de Toulouse et le vicomte de Béziers, et, en 1181, le cardinal Henri, évêque d'Albano, prêcha une première croisade, non en Terre-Sainte, mais dans l'intérieur de la France, non contre les infidèles Sarrasins, mais contre des hérétiques français et chrétiens. « Le centre de l'Église cathare dans le Midi était Toulouse, » dit le dernier historien du catharisme, M. le professeur Ch. Schmidt de Strasbourg. Le comte

1. Il suffit de rappeler, comme exemple des poésies anti-romaines qu'on chantait en Languedoc, un *Sirrente* du troubadour Guillaume de Figueras, cité dans le *Cours* de M. Villemain *sur la Littérature du Moyen Âge* (V.<sup>e</sup> leçon). C'est une longue imprécation en vingt strophes, de douze vers chacune, dont dix-huit commencent par le mot *Roma*. On ne trouve dans les trois fameux sonnets CV-CVII de Pétrarque ni plus de violence dans l'invective, ni une haine plus méprisante, ni des accusations plus terribles d'irrégion et d'immoralité.

Raymond VI devint, non pas comme son père, un des persécuteurs, mais au contraire un des chefs de la secte. En 1208, Innocent III fit prêcher la seconde croisade; Simon de Montfort la commanda, et bientôt Toulouse fut mise en interdit. En 1213, les prélats assemblés en concile à Lavaur écrivirent au Pape : « Si la perfide ville de Toulouse n'est pas retranchée de l'hydre de l'hérésie dont elle est le membre le plus putride, il est à craindre que le venin du monstre n'infecte de nouveau les lieux circonvoisins, déjà purifiés.... Nous vous prions donc en toute humilité que cette cité perverse, dont les crimes égalent ceux de Sodome et de Gomorrhe, soit radicalement exterminée, comme elle le mérite (*debito exterminio radicitus explantetur*), avec toutes les ordures et les souillures qui se sont accumulées sous le ventre gonflé de venin de la vipère. »

La ville se soumit en 1214. Cependant l'année suivante, Philippe Auguste envoya encore son fils Louis avec une armée contre « les restes des hérétiques toulousains. » Le pape, dans le concile de Latran, où Raymond VI et son fils se présentèrent en personne (1215), donna à Simon de Montfort leurs fiefs, la ville et le comté de Toulouse, le duché de Narbonne, les vicomtés de Carcassonne et de Béziers. Un tel acte ne pouvait être que le signal d'une nouvelle guerre; en 1216, Toulouse assiégée et incendiée par Simon, délivrée par Raymond VI, assiégée de nouveau, respira un instant à la mort de Montfort, qui fut tué sous ses murs. Elle se vit encore assiégée quarante-cinq jours, mais inutilement, par le prince Louis qui, plus tard, devenu roi, fit proclamer à Paris, en parlement, une troisième croisade (1226). Saint Antoine de Padoue, venu pour convertir les hérétiques, en fit brûler un grand nombre; enfin, en 1229, le comte Raymond VII fit amende honorable à Notre-Dame de Paris et Toulouse se rendit.

Ainsi finit la croisade. Elle eut des résultats politiques

importants, mais elle manqua son but. « L'hérésie, dit M. Ch. Schmidt, subsista dans le Languedoc, aussi puissante, aussi fortement enracinée dans l'esprit du peuple, » et il ajoute avec raison que « l'indignation produite par les horreurs de la guerre, la ruine du pays, l'anéantissement de l'indépendance nationale et religieuse, la destruction de la vie joyeuse et poétique du Midi et de ses traditions chevaleresques, cette indignation amère et profonde communiqua à l'hérésie de nouvelles forces. »

Les bourgeois et les Capitouls, leurs chefs électifs, restèrent hérétiques de cœur.

Nulle part cependant le catholicisme ne s'organisa plus vigoureusement pour la lutte défensive et offensive. Pendant l'époque des croisades, Toulouse avait vu naître les confréries de pénitents. Ce fut entre les années 1209 et 1212 qu'un intime ami de saint Dominique, le fameux troubadour Foulques de Marseille, devenu moine, puis évêque de Toulouse, créa la première de ces associations qui furent imitées en Italie par saint Bonaventure en 1270. Nous trouverons quatre de ces confréries à Toulouse, au moment de la catastrophe des Calas, et nous verrons la plus ancienne de toutes y prendre une grande et funeste part. Cette institution qui eut un instant, sous la Ligue, une action redoutable sur l'esprit public en France, existe encore en Italie, et ses membres y sont vulgairement appelés *Sacconi*, du sac où ils s'enveloppent. On sait que les pénitents sont des laïques soumis à une organisation et une discipline qui ont quelque chose de militaire. Chaque confrérie a ses chefs, son lieu de réunion, sa bannière et son costume. Ce que ce costume a de plus remarquable, c'est la cagoule, qui, percée de deux trous devant les yeux, enveloppe toute la tête et permet de tout voir sans être vu et reconnu de personne. Il ne faut pas oublier que le fondateur avait armé les pénitents d'une sorte de sabre ou

coutelas porté en bandoulière par-dessus le sac et destiné à la guerre sainte contre les hérétiques. Il fallut renoncer plus tard à ces armes, trop dangereuses entre des mains invisibles.

Toute redoutable que fût cette institution, elle ne parut nullement suffire à consolider le catholicisme et à extirper l'hérésie.

Dès 1212, saint Dominique

..... *Il santo atleta*  
*Benigno a suoi ed a' nemici crudo*<sup>1</sup>,

s'étant établi à Toulouse avec ses premiers compagnons, y avait jeté les fondements de son *Ordre des frères Prêcheurs*, qui, au moment de sa mort, arrivée en 1221, comptait déjà plus de 60 couvents, et qui depuis 1233 jusqu'à nos jours, fut chargé par le pape Grégoire IX et ses successeurs du Saint-Office de l'Inquisition<sup>2</sup>.

1. Dante. *Par.* XI, 128.

2. Saint Louis protégea ce tribunal, qui fut confirmé par Philippe le Hardi, lors de la réunion du comté de Toulouse à la couronne, et par Philippe le Bel, en 1303.

Innocent III, en 1229, chargea le Concile de Toulouse d'organiser les tribunaux destinés à réprimer l'hérésie. Deux ans après, le Parlement conféra le titre de Cour Royale au Saint-Office de Toulouse, et depuis, le chef de ce corps porta le nom d'*Inquisiteur en tout le royaume de France, spécialement député par le Saint-Siège apostolique et par l'autorité Royale*. Charles VII lui donna de plus le titre de Conseiller du Roi.

Les rois et les gouverneurs du Languedoc n'entraient pas dans la ville sans prêter entre les mains de ce redoutable personnage le serment de conserver la foi et l'inquisition. Ce fut, selon les temps, le provincial des dominicains ou leur général, ou le Pape lui-même, qui élit cet inquisiteur. Depuis le seizième siècle, les moines de Saint-Dominique le nommèrent à la pluralité des voix, mais déjà son autorité avait reçu quelques atteintes; l'élection devait être ratifiée par le roi et enregistrée au Parlement. On soumit l'inquisiteur à l'appel comme d'abus devant le Parlement, lorsque cette cour siégea définitivement à Toulouse; on lui donna même des adjoints choisis dans ce corps. Quoique confirmé encore par François 1<sup>er</sup> en 1540, son pouvoir ne cessa de décliner. Enfin un archevêque de Toulouse, Charles de Montchal, jaloux d'une juridiction étrangère à la sienne, la fit abolir par arrêt du conseil sous le règne de Louis XIV, en 1645.

Malgré cette suppression, le titre d'Inquisiteur, désormais sans autorité, mais non sans prestige, subsista à Toulouse jusqu'en 1706. C'était encore la Congrégation du Saint-Office qui nommait ce dignitaire et le roi

Raymond VII fut un prince sans énergie; il laissa l'inquisition brûler vifs les Cathares, et exhumer des cadavres d'hérétiques pour les jeter sur le bûcher. Tantôt, vivement sollicité par les Capitouls et intimidé par le peuple, il chassait les inquisiteurs; tantôt, réprimandé par le Pape, il leur abandonnait la ville. En 1242, six d'entre eux y furent assassinés. Les Dominicains eux-mêmes demandèrent alors à Innocent IV d'être déchargés de leur office. Il refusa. Le château de Montégut était l'asile des Albigeois; Raymond le prit, et les inquisiteurs brûlèrent vifs, sans procès, deux cents prisonniers. Dès lors, le triomphe du catholicisme fut assuré, quoiqu'il mît encore un demi-siècle à s'affermir. Après Raymond, son gendre Alphonse de France devint comte de Toulouse, et l'antique nationalité, à la fois romaine et hérétique du Midi, s'affaiblit peu à peu. Réuni plus tard à la couronne de France, le comté de Toulouse fut en proie, depuis ce moment, à des persécutions plus soutenues. Une recrudescence du Catharisme à la fin du treizième siècle eut le sort qu'on pouvait prévoir; Philippe le Bel vint à Toulouse en 1304 pour l'écraser.

Mais l'ennemi vaincu ne faisait que changer de nature; les Vaudois se multipliaient de plus en plus, et ce fut contre eux que les fils de Dominique luttèrent ensuite pendant deux siècles.

Enfin arriva la Réformation. Un des premiers martyrs protestants de France fut Jean de Caturce, licencié en

confirmait son choix. Le père Antoine Massoulé fut le dernier à porter le titre d'inquisiteur, mais on montre encore la maison où siégeait le tribunal et qui avait été donnée à saint Dominique pour y établir son Ordre. Cette maison est devenue la propriété et la demeure des Jésuites. Elle portait ces deux inscriptions : *Domus inquisitionis. — Unus Deus, una fides.* Au-dessus de la porte étaient peints à fresque, à droite et à gauche d'un crucifix, les deux principaux saints de l'Ordre, le fondateur et saint Pierre martyr. (On peut consulter sur cet inquisiteur canonisé mes *Lettres sur les Beaux-Arts en Italie*, p. 12.) Toute cette décoration est à peu près détruite, mais j'en ai vu les traces. M. du Mège en a donné une représentation à peu près exacte dans son *Histoire des Institutions de Toulouse*, t. IV, p. 480.

droit, brûlé vif à Toulouse <sup>1</sup>. Pendant trente ans, un grand nombre de huguenots y furent mis à mort, sans que l'Église Réformée cessât de s'accroître; le parlement, le clergé et une partie de la population sévissaient en toute occasion, mais en vain. L'édit de janvier interrompit ces persécutions et autorisa le culte réformé; quelques-uns des Capitouls en charge à ce moment étaient favorables au protestantisme. Ils firent bâtir, en dehors de la porte de Villeneuve, un temple qui pouvait contenir huit mille personnes et qui se trouva encore trop petit. Cette tolérance publique irrita d'autant plus les adversaires de la Réforme.

En 1562, dix ans avant la Saint-Barthélemy parisienne, Toulouse eut la sienne<sup>2</sup>. Des protestants ensevelissaient une femme; quelques catholiques prétendirent que la défunte était de leur Église, attaquèrent le cortège funèbre et s'emparèrent du cadavre. Une rixe violente eut lieu. Un prêtre sonna le tocsin. La population catholique se jeta sur les réformés, beaucoup moins nombreux, et la grande majorité du Parlement prit hautement parti contre eux. Ce corps fit le tour de la ville en robes rouges, ordonnant aux catholiques, de la part du roi, de *courre sus* aux réformés, les engageant à adopter une croix blanche comme signe de ralliement et à marquer leurs maisons. Ainsi organisée, la guerre civile devint affreuse; les protestants se retranchèrent dans l'Hôtel de Ville, où ils avaient quelques pièces de canon; pour les en déloger, on mit le feu aux maisons contiguës, et le Parlement défendit sous peine de mort d'éteindre l'incendie; mais les assiégés abattirent à coups de canon ces maisons enflammées. Alors Fourquevaux, gouverneur de

1. C'est à propos de ce supplice et d'autres qui suivirent, que Rabelais montre son héros fuyant Toulouse, et accuse les habitants de « faire brusler leurs régents tout vifs (*Pant.* II, v). »

2. On verra plus tard que le second anniversaire séculaire de ce massacre coïncida avec les malheurs des Calas, et eut sur leur sort une fatale influence.



Narbonne, fut envoyé, l'olivier à la main, leur proposer deux articles de paix : ils sortiraient tous de l'Hôtel de Ville, en y laissant leurs armes et leurs munitions, et, à cette condition, ils se retireraient en liberté où bon leur semblerait. Ne pouvant tenir plus longtemps dans leur asile, ils se résignèrent à prendre ce parti, et le jour de Pentecôte, ils sortirent tous, sans armes, pendant l'heure des vêpres, espérant éviter ainsi la fureur du peuple, qui déjà avait massacré tous ceux des leurs qu'il avait pu saisir. Mais leur retraite ne pouvait être ignorée. Des cris menaçants éclatèrent de tous côtés ; la foule qui remplissait les églises en sortit précipitamment et massacra sans pitié les huguenots désarmés. Les historiens portent de trois à cinq mille le nombre des victimes.

Loin de sévir contre les assassins, le Parlement fit mettre à mort ceux qui leur avaient échappé. Le cruel Monluc arriva à temps pour en voir quelque chose, et dit dans ses *Mémoires* (t. II, p. 73) : « *Je ne vis jamais tant de têtes voler.* » Le Parlement s'épura lui-même en destituant vingt-deux conseillers suspects, et ce fut à grand'peine que le premier président de Masencal, soupçonné de tolérance, garda sa charge. Par le même motif, tous les Capitouls de l'année 1562 furent déposés, leurs enfants dégradés de noblesse, leurs biens confisqués, et cet arrêt inscrit sur une plaque de marbre au Capitole. Ce massacre *délivra* Toulouse de l'hérésie qui depuis ce moment, sans être entièrement extirpée, n'y subsista plus qu'à l'état de minorité très-faible, toujours persécutée et détestée.

Alors seulement le catholicisme fut définitivement triomphant dans cette cité, qui avait été si longtemps et si opiniâtrément hérétique. Les rares protestants de Toulouse, quand ils osèrent y reparaître, se trouvèrent seuls héritiers de toutes les haines accumulées contre ces Ariens, ces Cathares, ces Albigeois, ces Vaudois, ces Huguenots, qui avaient si longtemps rempli le pays de

leur hérésie bonne ou mauvaise, contre lesquels n'avaient suffi ni trois croisades, ni les pénitents, ni l'inquisition, et qu'avait détruits enfin le seul remède qui puisse prévaloir contre une foi religieuse, l'extermination. Le Parlement institua à perpétuité une fête annuelle dite de la *Délivrance*, qui avait lieu le 17 mai, anniversaire du massacre. Il décida que chaque année les arrêts qu'il venait de rendre seraient relus au peuple, après quoi des processions auraient lieu pour rendre grâces à Dieu. En 1564, on obtint du Pape Pie IV une bulle par laquelle il autorisa cette solennité religieuse, qui devait durer deux jours, et y attacha des indulgences et des bénédictions spéciales<sup>1</sup>.

Dès lors, la procession annuelle, où les quatre confréries ne manquaient pas de figurer avec leurs bannières, ainsi que toutes les autorités et tous les corps de métier, réchauffa périodiquement la haine populaire contre les protestants. Les châsses de quarante saints étaient portées en grande pompe des cryptes de Saint-Sernin à la cathédrale<sup>2</sup>. Les huit Capitouls, en robes

1. Voltaire appelle cette fête *la procession annuelle où l'on remercie Dieu de quatre mille assassinats*. (A Argental, 10 déc. 1767.)

2. C'est, dit-on, au culte rendu à ces reliques célèbres que Toulouse dut le surnom de la *Sainte* qu'elle a longtemps porté. Aussi, les fameuses cryptes ou *martyria* de Saint-Sernin où l'on conserve les *corps saints*, ont reçu les deux inscriptions suivantes :

*Hic sunt vigiles qui custodiunt urbem.*  
« Ici sont les gardiens qui veillent sur la ville. »  
*Non est in toto sanctior orbe locus.*

Voici comment cette dernière a été traduite par un poète de la ville, Goudelin, lors de l'entrée de Louis XIII à Toulouse :

De l'hérésie en vain gronde l'affreux tonnerre,  
Et Tolose vous dit avec la vérité :  
« Sire, il n'est point de lieu plus sacré sur la terre. »

Il existe encore, dans cette même église de Saint-Sernin, et j'y ai vu un monument ignoble des haines ecclésiastiques. Les stalles en bois sculpté qui entourent le chœur portent ce qu'on appelle une *miséricorde* ou *patience*; c'est-à-dire que le dessous de la stalle, lorsqu'on le redresse, forme un second siège plus petit et plus haut qui soutient les chanoines quand ils sont censés chanter debout. C'est sur une de ces

d'écarlate à chaperons d'hermine, portaient le dais du Saint-Sacrement, précédés de leurs quatre assesseurs, qui tenaient des cierges à la main. Dès le 18 juin de la même année, et depuis à maintes reprises, mais toujours en vain, le gouvernement a interdit cette fête cruelle.

La Révocation de l'édit de Nantes fut reçue à Toulouse avec enthousiasme, et réveilla le souvenir néfaste du massacre.

A cette époque, l'administration municipale fit orner l'Hôtel de Ville de peintures à fresques par Pierre Rivals. Une de ces fresques rappelait la Révocation de l'édit de Nantes : Louis XIV y tenait d'une main l'épée nue, de l'autre le crucifix. A ses côtés, des soldats démolissaient des temples et plantaient la croix sur leurs ruines. Au fond, d'autres soldats forçaient des protestants à s'agenouiller devant des images.

Le second tableau représentait le massacre de 1562. On y voyait des protestants sans armes, arrêtés avec leurs femmes et leurs enfants près des portes de la ville, au moment où ils fuyaient, et assassinés par des soldats ou des bourgeois. Quelques-uns étaient précipités du haut des remparts. Des femmes, portant leurs enfants dans leurs bras, imploraient en vain les meurtriers <sup>1</sup>.

En 1762 on prépara toutes choses pour célébrer, avec une pompe inusitée, le second anniversaire séculaire du massacre des huguenots. Les Capitouls de cette année, dans leur compte rendu annuel, s'expriment en ces ter-

sellettes qu'on a représenté quelques personnages groupés devant une chaire qu'occupe un pourceau, et au-dessous sont sculptés ces mots :

CALVIN  
PORC PRESCHANT.

1. Ces fresques ont disparu avec les murs qu'elles décoraient. Depuis, on en eut honte. M. du Mège, après avoir vaguement et rapidement décrit la plus importante, celle du massacre de 1562, conteste l'existence de la première, ou du moins prétend qu'elle n'était pas à l'Hôtel de Ville. Mais ce qu'il en dit lui-même suffit. (*Hist. des Inst.*, t. IV, p. 292.)

mes : « Témoins et interprètes de la religion de tous les ordres de cette ville, nous avons tâché de faire célébrer avec toute la magnificence possible l'*année séculaire de la délivrance*. Notre premier soin a été, comme vous le savez, Messieurs, d'imiter la piété de nos pères et de demander à notre Saint-Père une bulle conforme à celle que Pie IV avait accordée au corps de la ville<sup>1</sup>. » En effet, Clément XIII, par une bulle expresse, renouvela et étendit à huit jours entiers les privilèges religieux, accordés par Pie IV pour deux jours seulement. Les réjouissances publiques furent magnifiques. Un feu d'artifice fort admiré termina la fête. On voyait au sommet du principal décor, une figure de la Religion tenant la croix d'une main, et de l'autre un calice surmonté de l'hostie.

Un luxe inouï jusque-là distingua la procession séculaire ; des étoffes de soie et d'or avaient été depuis longtemps commandées à Lyon pour orner les reposoirs et revêtir les officiants.

Voltaire se trompait quand il écrivait un peu brutalement, le 9 janvier 1763 à Mme Calas : « Je pense que cette cérémonie d'Iroquois ne subsistera pas longtemps<sup>2</sup>. » En 1862, cent ans après cette lettre, l'archevêque de Toulouse, par un mandement exprès, annonça de nouveau cette fête éclatante et séculaire. Le gouvernement s'opposa, avec grande raison selon nous, à ce que cette procession injurieuse eût lieu dans les rues, d'autant plus que Toulouse, en notre temps, n'est plus *délivrée* de l'hérésie : elle a une Église protestante, des pasteurs, un temple ; d'ailleurs nous sommes assuré qu'un grand nombre de ses habitants catholiques n'approuvent ni le massacre des protestants en 1562, ni les étranges actions de grâces qu'à ce sujet on rend de nos jours au

1. Nous rendons volontiers aux Capitouls ce témoignage qu'on ne trouve dans la délibération citée plus haut aucune parole de haine ou de provocation contre les protestants.

2. *Lettres de Voltaire*; voir notre recueil, p. 173.

ciel. Mais le gouvernement n'empêcha nullement, et en cela aussi il eut raison, que la fête ne fût célébrée dans l'intérieur des Églises catholiques de Toulouse. Elle l'a été; on a pu juger par là si le clergé, pour rappeler ici un mot fameux, a oublié et appris ce qu'il aurait pu et dû oublier ou apprendre en trois siècles.

Il y a cent ans, au milieu d'une population si passionnée, dans une ville où les guerres civiles avaient laissé de si vivants souvenirs et dont les magistrats se faisaient une gloire de la persécution, ces manifestations d'une joie cruelle, ces provocations à l'intolérance ne pouvaient s'étaler dans les rues, sans surexciter les esprits. En effet, à Toulouse, l'année 1762 fut occupée tout entière par trois procès pour cause de religion, celui du pasteur Rochette et des frères Grenier, exécutés en février, celui de Calas, roué le 10 mars, et enfin celui de Sirven, qui n'échappa que par la fuite à la mort<sup>1</sup>.

Jean Calas, sa femme, son fils, Lavaysse, Jeanne Viguié, attendaient leur arrêt, tous cinq sous le poids d'une accusation capitale, au moment où le Parlement fit exécuter François Rochette et trois gentilshommes verriers qui avaient entrepris de l'arracher aux cavaliers de la maréchaussée. Le 19 février, sur la place du Petit-Salin, le dernier des pasteurs martyrs, âgé seulement de vingt-six ans, fut pendu; il portait sur la poitrine un écriteau avec ces mots : *Ministre de la R. P. R.* (Religion prétendue Réformée). En montant à l'échelle du gibet, il chanta le verset des martyrs huguenots :

La voici, l'heureuse journée  
Qui répond à notre désir!  
Louons Dieu qui nous l'a donnée:  
Faisons-en tout notre plaisir.  
Grand Dieu, c'est à toi que je crie;  
Garde ton Cint et le soutiens!

1. On a prétendu que cette coïncidence n'avait pu avoir aucune influence sur les dispositions du peuple à l'égard de ces cinq victimes, parce que leurs supplices eurent lieu avant la procession. Mais est-il possible de croire que cette attente d'une fête doublement séculaire, ces apprêts

Grand Dieu, c'est toi seul que je prie :  
Bénis ton peuple et le maintiens !

(Ps. CXVIII, 12.)

Les trois gentilshommes furent décapités ; le plus jeune se couvrit le visage de ses deux mains pendant le supplice de ses frères ; mais quand le bourreau vint lui, et lui offrit encore une fois la vie s'il voulait se convertir, il lui répondit tranquillement : *Fais ton devoir* et mit sa tête sur le billot.

Ces exécutions où plusieurs protestants périssaient la fois n'avaient donc rien d'inouï à Toulouse. Il faudrait s'en souvenir quand on verra cinq accusés se défendre contre les soupçons de toute la ville, sous la plus odieuse des imputations, celle d'un parricide inspiré par le fanatisme<sup>1</sup>.

inusités, commandés un an à l'avance, et enfin les faveurs signalées du Saint-Siège, ne firent aucune impression sur ce peuple ardent qui allait célébrer avec plus d'éclat que jamais sa *délivrance* de l'hérésie et le triomphe de son Église ? Les faits prouvent le contraire.

1. Comme on nous a accusé de rapprocher à tort du supplice de Jean Calas celui des quatre autres victimes immolées à Toulouse quelques jours avant lui, nous citerons la lettre suivante, où l'influence qu'exerça chacun de ces deux procès sur l'autre est attestée par l'autorité elle-même.

Le 28 octobre 1781, le *subdélégué Amblard* écrivit à son supérieur M. de St-Priest, intendant du Languedoc :

« Les accusés sont gardés à vue, et personne absolument ne peut le parler ni les voir. On tient en même temps dans les prisons du Palais le ministre (Rochette) avec plusieurs protestants (les trois frères de Grignier), qui se sont révoltés et qui ont fait sédition dans la généralité de Montauban. Ils sont tous gardés à vue, chargés de fers, et il y a quatre sentinelles depuis la porte de la prison, de cent en cent pas, jusqu'au corps de garde de la place du Salin qui, en cas de besoin, pourrait être rassemblé d'un coup de sifflet. Cette garde a été doublée. Ces deux événements, presque à la même époque, ne peuvent que nuire aux accusés respectifs.

« J'ai l'honneur, etc.

« AMBLARD. »

(Cette pièce, qui existe aux Archives départementales de l'Hérault, a été publiée par M. l'abbé Salvan dans son ouvrage destiné à réfuter le nôtre, p. 96.)

Est-il nécessaire de remarquer à quel point ces précautions inusitées et parfaitement inutiles, quoi qu'en ait dit M. de St-Florentin, qui l'

Toute cette longue guerre contre l'hérésie a laissé chez ce peuple, essentiellement partisan de la tradition et fier de son passé, des impressions hostiles que rien n'a pu changer; il est arrivé, là comme ailleurs, une chose qui explique bien des craintes et des haines. Toulouse, longtemps foyer brillant de la libre pensée, était devenue depuis 1562 toute catholique; dès lors, on y avait joui d'un calme relativement très-grand. Il était facile aux persécuteurs triomphants de rejeter la faute de ces luttes sanglantes, sur les victimes qu'ils avaient exterminées. Le peuple les crut; et ce fut ainsi que le nom seul d'hérétique souleva, pendant des siècles, en cette ville qui avait tant souffert, les préventions les plus amères et de folles terreurs; or, si quelque chose rend impitoyable et atroce, c'est la peur. J'ai constaté la parfaite exactitude de ce mot d'un biographe de Calas : « La majeure partie de ses concitoyens conservèrent toujours contre sa mémoire des préventions que le temps n'a pas effacées<sup>1</sup>. »

Il faut bien le reconnaître, depuis les cruautés atroces de la croisade contre les Albigeois jusqu'au hideux massacre du général Ramel en 1815 par les Verdets, l'histoire de Toulouse offre maint exemple du degré d'emportement et de frénésie que peuvent atteindre les passions religieuses ou politiques chez un peuple mobile, plein d'imagination et d'ardeur. Voltaire n'a eu que trop raison de dire : « Cette affaire, ou je suis fort trompé, est un reste de l'esprit des croisades contre les Albigeois<sup>2</sup>. » Et l'on est tenté par moments de s'écrier avec lui : « Il semble qu'il y ait dans le Languedoc une furie infernale, amenée autrefois par les inquisiteurs

approuve, garde doublée, sentinelles placées de cent pas en cent pas, durent émouvoir une population si facile à agiter? .

1. *Biographie Toulousaine*.

2. Au président de la Marche, 25 avril 1762.

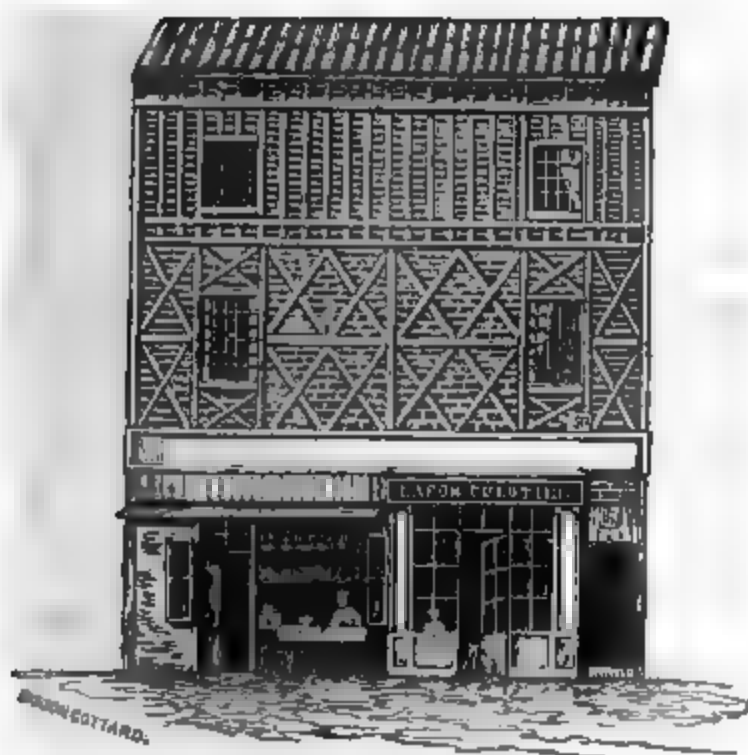
## 18 COUP D'ŒIL SUR L'HISTOIRE RELIGIEUSE, ETC.

à la suite de Simon de Montfort ; et depuis ce temps, elle secoue quelquefois son flambeau. »

Hâtons-nous de le dire, malgré la persistance des préjugés populaires, ce flambeau est éteint. Nous sommes convaincu qu'il ne se rallumera jamais ; et c'est à regret que nous avons dû rappeler des souvenirs néfastes. Mais il nous a paru indispensable de montrer ce qu'était, en 1762, l'esprit du peuple toulousain, avant de raconter le drame sanglant où ce peuple a joué un grand rôle.







LA MAISON CALAS,  
RUE DES FILATIERS, N° 50, A TOULOUSE.  
(Réduction d'un dessin fait en 1835.)

## CHAPITRE PREMIER.

### L'ARRESTATION.

*Civium ardor prava jubentium.*  
(Hor. Od., III, 3, 2.)

Il arrive quelquefois qu'un malheur imprévu change en un seul instant, pour ses victimes, la plus paisible sécurité en un long enchaînement de douleurs et de périls. Plus tard il leur paraît étrange de se rappeler, après tant de maux, l'heureuse tranquillité de vie.

les circonstances vulgaires et journalières, au milieu desquelles elles ont été frappées. On a quelque peine à se persuader que des instants si calmes, si doux, aient précédé immédiatement des temps si cruels ; il est triste, il est presque effrayant de songer qu'au moment même où l'on y touchait, rien encore ne les faisait pressentir.

C'est sous cette involontaire impression que se trouvent ceux qui connaissent l'histoire de Calas et de sa famille, lorsqu'ils remontent à la date funeste du 13 octobre 1761.

Cette journée, qui commença tous leurs malheurs, allait s'achever au milieu des occupations habituelles du négoce. La boutique d'indiennes de Jean Calas fut fermée à l'heure accoutumée, celle du souper de la famille. La *Grand'Rue des Filettiers*<sup>1</sup>, alors la plus commerçante de Toulouse, ne cessa d'être animée par le mouvement et les causeries des marchands et de leurs commis occupés à tout mettre en ordre pour la nuit, ou assis en plein air, devant leur porte, par groupes inégaux. Ce soir-là, il y avait nombreuse compagnie devant la boutique de la demoiselle Brandelac<sup>2</sup>, à quelques pas de celle des Calas. Plusieurs témoins passèrent devant la maison sans y rien apercevoir d'extraordinaire, sans entendre aucun bruit suspect. L'un d'eux<sup>3</sup> se promenant à la fraîcheur du soir, se trouvait là à huit heures et demie, puis à neuf heures et quart, et il atteste que tout était encore silencieux. Ce fut seulement à neuf heures et demie, ou peu après, qu'il entendit chez les Calas des cris de désespoir. Ces mêmes cris furent entendus par quatorze personnes occupées dans les maisons voisines ou qui se reposaient au dehors ; et toutes s'accordent sur le moment fatal, sinon sur les paroles qu'elles

1. Note 1, à la fin du volume.

2. Témoins Gourdin et demoiselle Marseillan.

3. Le François. Sa déposition est confirmée par celle d'Arnaud Sortal.

avaient cru distinguer. La plupart déclarent que l'on criait : *Ah ! mon Dieu !* et diffèrent seulement sur ce qu'elles ouïrent de plus. Au bruit, la servante de Mme Calas, Jeanne Viguiier, ouvrit la fenêtre du premier étage, échangea quelques questions avec d'autres femmes, entra, et bientôt reparut à la porte en criant : « C'en est fait ! il est mort<sup>1</sup> ! » ou, selon d'autres et en patois : *Ah ! moun Diou ! l'an tuat<sup>2</sup> !* Peu d'instant après, on vit sortir en courant, de la maison, un jeune homme étranger, vêtu d'un habit gris, portant veste et culottes rouges, un tricorne bordé d'or et l'épée au côté. Un autre jeune homme, mais celui-là bien connu du voisinage, Pierre, le troisième fils de M. Calas, sortit aussi à deux reprises et revint d'abord avec Gorsse, le *garçon* ou élève du chirurgien Camoire, ensuite avec M. Cazeing, négociant comme Calas et son intime ami<sup>3</sup>, puis enfin avec un homme de loi, le sieur Clausade<sup>4</sup>.

Les voisins accoururent de tous côtés. Avant l'arrivée de Gorsse, un ami des jeunes Calas, Antoine Delpech, fils d'un négociant catholique, entra dans la boutique : Marc-Antoine, l'aîné des enfants de Calas, y était étendu sans vie, la tête supportée par des ballots ; son père, appuyé sur le comptoir<sup>5</sup>, se désespérait. Par moments, dit la servante dans sa déposition, « il se jetait partout, » et la mère « moins éplorée<sup>6</sup>, » penchée sur le cadavre, s'efforçait en vain de lui faire avaler un cordial et en mouillait ses tempes. Delpech a déclaré qu'il crut d'abord à un duel. Il pensa que Marc-Antoine, « qui faisait bien des armes, » avait eu affaire avec quelqu'un.

1. Témoin : Marie Rey, servante de Ducassou.

2. Témoin : Demoiselle Campagnac.

3. Jean-Pierre Cazeing était né en 1696. Son fils Jacques, longtemps connu sous le nom de Cazeing aîné, était très-lié avec les jeunes Calas.

4. Voir sur toutes ces allées et venues les Mémoires de Lavaysse et la Déclaration de Pierre.

5. Lettre de Mme Calas.

6. Témoin : Brun.

« Je le tâtonnai, dit-il, sur l'estomac et autres parties de son corps que je trouvai froides, mais sans blessures <sup>1</sup>. » Gorsse, l'élève chirurgien, survint en ce moment et examina le corps ; « ayant porté la main sur le cœur, il le trouva, dit-il, froid sur toutes ses parties et sans palpitation. »

Ces témoignages, qui confirment ce que déclarèrent les membres de la famille, sont importants ; puisque tout le cadavre et le cœur même étaient froids à neuf heures et demie ou quelques minutes après, les cris que l'on venait d'entendre à l'instant ne pouvaient être ceux du défunt ; personne n'ignore qu'il faut quelque temps pour qu'un corps humain perde sa chaleur.

Du reste, Gorsse déclara que le défunt avait péri, pendu ou étranglé.

Clausade <sup>2</sup>, l'homme de loi, voyant l'inutilité des secours, conseilla à la famille d'avertir la police « pour constater la mort de ce jeune homme et obtenir la permission de le faire enterrer. » Lavaysse, l'étranger en habit gris, qui venait de rentrer, s'offrit encore pour cette mission, et courut avec Clausade chercher M<sup>e</sup> Monyer, assesseur des Capitouls, et leur greffier, Savanier. Quand ils revinrent, une foule agitée se pressait autour de la maison ; quarante soldats du guet en gardaient la porte, et l'un des Capitouls, David de Beaudrigue, y était déjà. L'assesseur et le greffier furent reconnus, et on les laissa entrer ; mais Lavaysse, qui les suivait, fut repoussé par les soldats ; en vain il insista, disant qu'il était l'ami de la maison et qu'il en venait. Il s'écria alors qu'il y avait soupé le soir même. A ce mot, on comprit qu'il pouvait être nécessaire de l'entendre ou même de s'assurer de lui. Il entra, et, dès ce moment,

1. La déposition de Brun (12<sup>e</sup> témoin), qui était aussi entré dans la maison, atteste le même fait.

2. Lav., 1 et 3.

son sort fut lié à celui des Calas; il partagea pendant quatre années leurs angoisses, leurs humiliations et leurs dangers.

David de Beaudrigue avait été éveillé dans son premier sommeil. Au premier mot que lui dirent deux commerçants du quartier, Borrel et Trubelle, qui l'avertirent chez lui à onze heures et demie, il accourut avec le guet, fit appeler un médecin et deux chirurgiens. Il commença par faire arrêter Pierre Calas qui était resté auprès du corps, attendant la police, tandis que ses parents s'étaient retirés dans leur chambre, à l'étage supérieur.

Pendant ce temps la foule, qui se pressait aux portes, se livrait à d'ardents commentaires sur cette sinistre énigme : des cris confus entendus de tout le quartier et le corps inanimé d'un jeune homme de vingt-huit ans trouvé au milieu des siens. Ces commentaires, loin d'être charitables, s'enflammaient de toute la chaleur des haines de religion, encore si vivaces à cette époque dans tout le Midi, et à Toulouse plus que partout ailleurs. Les Calas étaient protestants, et bien connus pour tels; une mort si imprévue et si étrange, arrivée au milieu d'eux, devait paraître un crime à ceux qui regardaient un protestant comme capable de tout; on n'hésita pas à croire, à dire qu'ils avaient assassiné leur fils. Mais pourquoi? quel motif donner à ce meurtre épouvantable, commis par un frère, un père et une mère? Le fanatisme n'alla pas chercher bien loin ses motifs; il les trouva en lui-même : ces Huguenots, s'écria-t-on, ont tué leur fils pour l'empêcher de se faire catholique. Cette hideuse accusation fut lancée du sein de la foule. On n'a jamais pu savoir par quelle voix; mais elle fut avidement reçue et répétée, de bouche en bouche, devenant de plus en plus affirmative. Personne ne l'adopta plus vite ni plus complètement que le Capitoul David. Ce cri anonyme lui parut la voix

de la vérité. Ce soupçon fut pour lui un trait de lumière<sup>1</sup>.

Il est peut-être utile de consigner ici une circonstance bien connue des habitants de Toulouse. Les protestants peu nombreux qui habitaient cette ville s'étaient groupés pour la plupart dans les quartiers de la Dalbade et de la Daurade et trouvaient dans leur rapprochement un motif de sécurité relative. Calas, au contraire, était contraint, par la nature de son commerce, à demeurer dans une partie de la ville qui était et qui est encore essentiellement catholique. Il s'y trouvait isolé et entouré de voisins hostiles, sinon à sa personne, au moins à son Église<sup>2</sup>.

David omit de décrire l'état des lieux et ne prit pas même la peine de l'examiner; il ne fit pas visiter les endroits de la maison où des assassins auraient pu se cacher, comme le long corridor qui conduit de la rue à la cour; il oublia de constater si ceux qu'il accusait d'avoir étranglé un jeune homme dans la force de l'âge avaient les habits en désordre et portaient les marques d'une lutte sur leur personne; il omit de s'assurer si l'on trouverait dans la chambre du prétendu martyr des livres catholiques ou des *objets de piété*; il ne conserva pas même les papiers trouvés dans les poches des vêtements et qu'on déclara plus tard être des vers et chansons obscènes. En un mot, sans accomplir une seule des formalités que la loi exigeait, David monta à

1. Si David avait mieux connu les lois qu'il était chargé d'appliquer, il aurait pu se souvenir de ce texte très-précis et plein de sagesse, qui lui prescrivait une conduite tout opposée à celle qu'il a tenue : *Vanæ voces populi non sunt audiendæ; nec enim vocibus eorum credi oportet, quando aut noxium crimine absolvi aut innocentem condemnari desiderant.* (L. 12. C. de pœnis, lib. 9. tit. xxvii.) « Les vains bruits de la foule ne doivent point être écoutés; il ne faut en croire les voix populaires, ni quand elles veulent absoudre un criminel, ni quand elles demandent la condamnation d'un innocent. »

2. On nous affirme que, de nos jours, à Toulouse, au moment d'acheter un hôtel, une famille protestante dont nous pourrions citer le nom en a été détournée par le caractère ultra-catholique du voisinage.

la chambre de M. et de Mme Calas, leur ordonna de le suivre à l'hôtel de ville, fit porter sur un brancard le corps de Marc-Antoine et son habit qu'on avait trouvé plié sur le comptoir; et arrêta, avec les Calas, toutes les personnes qu'il trouva dans la maison, leur servante, le jeune Lavaysse et Cazeing, leur ami, qui n'était arrivé chez eux qu'à la nouvelle de la catastrophe. Un défenseur des prévenus <sup>1</sup> releva plus tard le tort irréparable que leur fit cette arrestation si précipitée. Il est possible, disons mieux, il est probable qu'un examen attentif des lieux eût démontré immédiatement le suicide. Les preuves les plus évidentes ont été perdues sans ressource.

L'arrestation d'ailleurs était illégale. Elle ne pouvait avoir lieu sans mandat qu'en cas de *flagrant délit* ou de *clameur publique*. Ce dernier mot ne signifie nullement l'opinion du premier venu sur les causes d'un décès, mais le cas où l'on crie dans la rue après quelqu'un qui s'enfuit. Il n'y avait rien de pareil dans l'espèce.

Bien loin d'imaginer le sort qui les attendait, les parents du défunt, absorbés dans leur deuil, croyaient être conduits à l'hôtel de ville pour rendre compte des circonstances d'un suicide. Pierre Calas eut soin de mettre une chandelle allumée dans le corridor pour retrouver de la lumière quand ils reviendraient se coucher; mais David, en souriant de sa simplicité, fit éteindre le flambeau, et leur dit qu'ils *n'y reviendraient pas de*

1. Voici ce qu'écrivit à ce sujet un magistrat plein de sagesse et d'autorité, M. de la Salle, conseiller au Parlement de Toulouse :

« Le moins que les accusés puissent prétendre lorsque, comme dans ce cas, le juge a négligé de vérifier les faits qui pourraient servir à leur justification, c'est que tous ces faits soient regardés comme constatés; car serait-il juste que la mauvaise disposition, l'impéritie ou la négligence du juge leur ravît leur défense naturelle? Or, si l'on regarde comme constants les faits que les Capitouls négligèrent de vérifier et dont la vérification n'est plus possible, il en résultera un corps de preuve, une démonstration, supérieure à tout ce qu'il pourrait y avoir de contraire dans l'information, que M. A. Calas n'a pas été mis à mort par ses parents. (*Bibliogr.*, n° 5.) »

*sitôt*<sup>1</sup>. Ils n'y sont jamais revenus. et c'était bien ce que David voulait dire.

C'est comme accusés du meurtre de leur fils, de leur frère, qu'il les arrêtaient, enveloppant dans le même soupçon, sans aucune preuve, la servante, Lavaysse et Cazeing. A l'égard de ce dernier, il y a même dans l'informe procès-verbal du Capitoul<sup>2</sup> un trait caractéristique : « *Nous avons fait conduire à l'hôtel de ville les S<sup>r</sup> Calas père et fils, la Dlle Calas mère<sup>3</sup>, la fille de service dudit Calas, le sieur Lavaise et un espèce d'abbé, qui se sont trouvés dans la maison.* » C'est Cazeing qu'il désigne comme *un espèce d'abbé*. Pourquoi? Cazeing était un fabricant d'étoffes dites *mignonnettes*, qui employait plusieurs centaines d'ouvriers ou d'ouvrières; ce n'était nullement un inconnu. On a prétendu plus tard<sup>4</sup> que David lui-même le connaissait bien, mais voulut le faire passer pour un ministre du Saint-Évangile, instigateur ou auteur du meurtre, et cette idée s'accorderait avec ce que pensaient et disaient alors, au sujet des pasteurs protestants, les catholiques exagérés de Toulouse<sup>5</sup>. Il nous semble cependant probable que David, ici comme en bien d'autres cas, a été coupable d'une précipitation insensée plutôt que de mauvaise foi; il a supposé réellement que Cazeing était un pasteur. Il fallait pousser bien loin la violence et la légèreté pour traîner un homme à travers les rues comme accusé d'un assassinat aussi horrible, sans même lui avoir demandé son nom, et pour désigner ensuite sur un acte légal un manufacturier par cette singulière épithète, *un espèce d'abbé*.

1. Décl. de P. C.

2. Voir le texte de ce procès-verbal, Pièces justif. II, à la fin du volume.

3. Rappelons une fois pour toutes que jusqu'à la Révolution le nom de *madame* était réservé légalement aux femmes nobles, et qu'une bourgeoise, même mariée, n'avait droit qu'au titre de demoiselle.

4. E. de B. 2.

5. Voir plus bas la lettre du Président du Puget à M. de Saint-Florentin (Pièces justificatives XXII), et dans notre chapitre xiv, les citations que le chevalier du Mège emprunte à l'abbé Magi.



En vain un collègue de David, le Capitoul Lisle Bribe, arrivé sur ces entrefaites, l'engageait à être plus calme et à procéder avec une rigueur moins impatiente : *Je prends tout sur moi*, répondit-il. — *C'est ici*, disait-il à tout moment, *la cause de la religion*. Il est évident qu'une crédulité passionnée et haineuse l'aveuglait.

Le funèbre cortège des magistrats et des accusés, entourés de quarante gardes, et précédés par le cadavre que l'on portait sur un brancard, traversa les rues pour se rendre à l'hôtel de ville.

On doit sentir combien une arrestation opérée avec tant d'éclat répandit au sein d'une population déjà hostile, le bruit du meurtre imputé aux Calas. La ville les crut non-seulement coupables, mais convaincus.

Nous citerons plus loin (ch. VII) la déposition d'une femme, Barthélemye Arnaud, qui donne une idée des propos tenus dans la foule sur le passage de ce cortège lugubre ; elle prouve l'effet que ce spectacle produisit sur les esprits.

On déposa le corps au Capitole, dans la chambre de la Gène, c'est-à-dire de la torture. Les accusés furent enfermés et interrogés séparément, mais dans le même édifice<sup>1</sup>. Calas et son fils furent mis dans des cachots sans fenêtres, les deux femmes dans des prisons moins obscures ; on envoya Lavaysse dans le logement de l'en-seigne du guet, nommé Poisson.

Ce fut alors seulement, et dans l'hôtel de ville, que David dressa son étrange procès-verbal, tandis qu'une loi formelle<sup>2</sup> et le simple bon sens lui ordonnaient d'é-

1. « Là existaient encore il y a trente ans (écrivait du Mège, en 1846) une prison affreuse, et les cachots que l'on avait si bien nommés l'Infernet. C'est là que le Capitoul Mandinelli, le Viguiier Portal, le fameux avocat Teronde et une foule d'autres personnes impliquées à tort ou à raison dans la conspiration de 1562, attendirent l'heure du supplice. Ce fut là aussi que, dans le siècle dernier, Jean Calas fut jeté, accusé d'avoir fait donner la mort à son fils. » (*Histoire des Institutions de Toulouse*, t. IV, p. 296.)

2. Ordonnance de 1670, tit. 4, art. 1 :

« Les juges dresseront, sur-le-champ et sans déplacer, procès-verbal

crire sur place et sans désemparer. C'est là aussi que fut rédigé le procès-verbal du médecin Latour, et des chirurgiens Peyronnet et Lamarque qui, après avoir prêté serment entre les mains de David, examinèrent le corps de Marc-Antoine. Selon leur certificat, qui a été publié<sup>1</sup>, le cadavre était « encore un peu chaud, sans aucune blessure, mais avec une marque livide au col, de l'étendue d'environ demi-pouce, en forme de cercle qui se perdait sur le derrière dans les cheveux, divisée en deux branches sur chaque côté du col.... ce qui nous a fait juger qu'il a été pendu encore vivant par lui-même ou par d'autres. »

Au premier moment, David ne laissa pas même de gardes sur les lieux, et ne songea pas à saisir les instruments de mort par lesquels Marc-Antoine avait péri<sup>2</sup>. Plus tard il y mit neuf soldats de garde, dont le nombre fut bientôt porté à vingt, et qui y furent entretenus pendant cinq mois aux frais des accusés.

Si les prévenus étaient innocents, on ne peut nier qu'ils tombaient entre les mains d'un magistrat peu éclairé; David en effet n'était pas un officier de police chargé de les arrêter; il était un de leurs juges<sup>3</sup>.

de l'état auquel seront trouvées les personnes blessées ou le corps mort; ensemble du lieu où le délit aura été commis, et de tout ce qui peut servir pour la décharge ou la conviction. »

1. Voir ce rapport, Pièces justificatives IV.

2. L'article 2, titre 4 de l'Ordonnance de 1670, prescrivait aux juges de faire transporter au greffe « les armes, meubles et hardes, qui pourront servir à la preuve et feront ensuite partie du procès. » Malgré cette loi, la corde et la *bille*, qui avaient servi au suicide, ne furent portés au greffe que plus tard.

3. Voir la note 2 (sur le plan de ce livre).

## CHAPITRE II.

### DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE ET LE CAPITOULAT.

*«.... Hodie tamen ex aliis iudiciis usurpatam, nescio quomodo jurisdictionem præter jus exercent communi certe nostrorum omnium, et quasi fatali malo. Nam qui fieri potest ut hi jus dicant, qui juris elementa nunquam cognoverunt? Creantur ad id munus quotannis octo viri ex quibus vix unum et alterum reperias, qui non imperitus, capers, rudisque sit, nullam juris scientiam vel rerum experientiam habens.*

CORAS. (Op. in-f<sup>o</sup>, 1603. t. II, p. 648 <sup>1</sup>.)

Aujourd'hui ils (les Capitouls) exercent, je ne sais comment, une juridiction illégale, usurpée sur d'autres juges, au préjudice commun et pour ainsi dire fatal de tous nos concitoyens. Car comment peut-il se faire que ceux-là rendent la justice, qui n'en ont jamais connu les éléments? Tous les ans on crée Capitouls huit hommes parmi lesquels on en trouverait à peine un ou deux qui ne soient incapables, ignorants, sans culture, n'ayant aucune science du droit ni même aucune expérience des choses.

Il nous semble nécessaire de faire connaître, avant tout, ce personnage et l'autorité qu'il exerçait à Toulouse.

François-Raymond David de Beaudrigue n'était point un scélérat, quoiqu'on l'ait représenté comme tel sur bien des théâtres, en France, en Hollande et en Allemagne<sup>2</sup>. C'était un homme naturellement violent, très-actif, ayant des talents réels, comme l'a dit Court de Gébelin<sup>3</sup>, « pour exercer la basse police qui n'exige que

1. Voir la note 3.

2. Voir plus bas, dans la *Bibliographie*, l'indication de plusieurs drames ou tragédies en diverses langues, n<sup>os</sup> 58-74, 109, 121, 122.

3. *Les Toulousaines*.

de l'autorité, » très-habile<sup>1</sup> à prendre sur le fait, avec une rapidité et une précision irrésistibles, les maisons de jeux clandestines. Mais ses qualités même et l'impétuosité de son caractère « qui l'embarquaient sans réflexion dans les démarches les plus fausses » le rendaient incapable des fonctions calmes et sereines de l'impassible justice. C'était un de ces hommes dangereux qu'une police habile sait utiliser en les dominant, mais à qui le sanctuaire des lois devrait être rigoureusement interdit. Malheureusement, à cette époque, ce n'étaient pas là deux domaines distincts, et le vague de ses attributions offrait au fougueux Capitoul mille occasions d'en dépasser les limites.

Il était gonflé de son importance au point de s'attirer sans cesse des mortifications qu'il eût pu éviter en se tenant à sa place. En voici un exemple assez singulier. Il trouva mauvais que les affiches de théâtre ne portassent aucune mention des Capitouls, et fit ajouter, au-dessous de l'autorisation d'usage, ces mots : *Et par permission de MM. les Capitouls*. Là-dessus, réclamation des personnages qui jusqu'alors avaient seuls brillé en tête des affiches toulousaines ; conflit de pouvoirs ; dénonciation au ministre secrétaire d'État ; et le tout finit par une lettre de ce dernier où il blâme l'ambitieux David et met fin à l'orgueilleuse innovation qu'il s'était permise<sup>2</sup>.

Un autre esclandre, où il paraît avoir obtenu l'avantage, quoique évidemment il eût tort, précéda de peu l'affreuse histoire des Calas. La Beaumelle<sup>3</sup> que David avait surpris et arrêté dans une maison où l'on jouait (celle

1. *Histoire du Languedoc*.

2. Archives impériales. — Dépêches du *Secrétariat*.

3. Bien connu par ses démêlés avec Voltaire, son édition des *Lettres de Mme de Maintenon* et beaucoup d'autres écrits, dont le dernier, publié par sa famille en 1856, est une *Vie de Maupertuis*. Nous aurons à raconter la part qu'il prit à l'affaire Calas et qui est à peu près ignorée : mais nous ne considérerons point ses assertions comme des preuves suffisantes, sachant que son caractère ardent et ses écrits ne méritent pas une confiance entière.

de la comtesse de Fontenille), le 9 janvier 1760, fut condamné par les Capitouls; puis, en ayant appelé, il fut absous par le Parlement. Son acquittement et un mémoire qu'il avait publié pour sa défense irritèrent David qui se vengea par un affront impardonnable. Le 3 octobre 1761, dix jours avant la mort de Marc-Antoine Calas, il fit désarmer son ennemi en plein jour sur la place Royale, comme n'étant pas noble et n'ayant pas droit de porter l'épée. La Beaumelle prouva qu'il avait reçu des lettres de noblesse en Danemark, où il avait résidé quelques années. En tout cas, à cette époque où une multitude de roturiers portaient l'épée sans même avoir de prétexte à donner, l'acte brutal du Capitoul ne valait pas mieux dans le fond que dans la forme.

J'ai cité à dessein ces deux faits, parce qu'ils sont complètement étrangers aux Calas, et font connaître le plus acharné de leurs persécuteurs sans préjuger en rien leur procès.

Nous avons d'ailleurs, pour connaître David, deux sortes de témoignages, également irrécusables, ses propres lettres au comte de Saint-Florentin<sup>1</sup>, que nous avons copiées sur les originaux aux Archives de l'État et celles que lui écrivit ce ministre<sup>2</sup>. Les premières décèlent en David un zèle aveugle pour le service du roi, non sans un vif désir d'en être récompensé, ce qu'il demande sans cesse. Son fanatisme catholique est celui d'un agent subalterne, aux yeux duquel désobéir au roi ou aux Capitouls, ne pas croire au pape ou blasphémer contre Dieu, c'est commettre un seul et même péché, le péché irrémissible de la rébellion. Un protestant, pour lui, est un ennemi de l'État, de l'Église, de Dieu même, et par conséquent un protestant est capable de tous les crimes.

1. Voir plus bas : Pièces justificatives, lettres III, XIII, XV, XXI, XXIV.

2. note 4, et Pièces justificatives, X.

Sa présomption, sa parfaite satisfaction de lui-même, éclatent dans une lettre où il rend compte de l'arrestation que nous venons de raconter. Il ne se contente pas de faire de belles promesses : « Je suis cette procédure avec vigueur et je ne perds pas un moment pour y donner toutes les suites qu'exige une affaire de pareille nature. » Il se vante d'avoir jusque-là bien rempli son devoir : « Quoique le chef du Consistoire soit absent et que je le représente par ma charge, néanmoins mon expérience ne m'a pas laissé douter de procéder ainsi que je l'ai fait. » Nous le verrons dans cette même correspondance se plaindre au ministre de ce que ses collègues *ne secondent pas son zèle*. On frémit en l'entendant promettre de *redoubler son zèle et son attention pour contenir le bon ordre*. On sait ce qu'il entend par là.

Quant aux lettres du ministre, elles sont plus significatives encore. Il écrit, le 25 octobre 1764, à l'intendant du Languedoc, M. de Saint-Priest :

« Il y a longtemps que je m'aperçois qu'en général le caractère trop entreprenant de ce Capitoul le porte à vouloir s'emparer de toute l'autorité au préjudice de ses confrères. Je lui écris pour lui en marquer tout mon mécontentement. »

Voici cette lettre, qui porte, dans la table d'un des volumes manuscrits des dépêches du *Secrétariat*, le titre très-exact de *semonse (sic)* :

A M. DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE.

« Il me revient, M., depuis assez longtemps des plaintes contre vous. Je sais qu'elles sont fondées, que vous affectez en toute occasion sur les autres Capitouls une supériorité que vous n'avez point, et que vous cherchez à vous emparer seul d'une autorité qui vous est commune avec eux. Vous venez d'en donner de nouvelles preuves à l'occasion de la vacance de la place d'Enseigne du guet de la ville, et je ne peux différer plus longtemps à vous marquer mon mécontentement d'une pareille conduite. A l'égard de la nomination que vous avez faite du Sr Bonneau fils, le Roi l'a entièrement désapprouvée. S. M. a cassé la délibération qui la

contient, et s'est déterminée à nommer un autre sujet par une ordonnance que j'envoie à M. de St-Priest qui vous fera connaître les intentions de S. M. à ce sujet. »

Il s'agit ici non des Calas, mais d'une troisième affaire où David laissa percer les défauts de son caractère. Il nous suffira d'en indiquer une quatrième qui fut la dernière ; le Capitoul fut révoqué à l'occasion d'une difficulté qui s'élève souvent encore dans tous les pays catholiques, la sépulture refusée à des protestants<sup>1</sup>.

Voici, en tout cas, un exemple, sinon de sa mauvaise foi, au moins de la tyrannie qu'il exerçait.

Les deux demoiselles Calas, leur frère Louis, quelques autres rares amis, se concertaient sur ce qu'on pouvait tenter pour la défense des prisonniers. Ils eurent lieu de croire que, pour cacher l'irrégularité de quelque acte légal, omis d'abord mais suppléé après coup, David l'avait antidaté et peut-être même y avait ajouté un mot important. Ils firent présenter par leur procureur une requête d'inscription en faux. Cette démarche, qui du reste ne nous paraît point justifiée par les pièces, irrita profondément le Capitoul ; il eut le crédit de faire condamner le procureur Duroux, coupable

1. La lettre suivante du ministre à M. de Bonrepos, procureur-général au Parlement, qui intercédait en faveur de David, achève de le faire connaître. Elle prouve bien que l'affaire des funérailles de deux Anglais morts à Toulouse fut moins la cause que le prétexte de la destitution de David. Cette lettre est datée du lendemain de la réhabilitation de Calas, et M. de Saint-Florentin, très-peu satisfait de ce grand acte de justice, laisse deviner, plutôt qu'il ne l'avoue, la véritable cause du châtiment infligé au Capitoul.

10 mars 1765.

« J'ai reçu, Monsieur, la lettre que vous avez pris la peine de m'écrire en faveur du sieur David. Ce qui est arrivé en dernier lieu à cause de l'inhumation de deux Anglais décédés à Toulouse, n'est pas le seul motif qui ait déterminé le Roi à ordonner sa destitution. Il était revenu à Sa Majesté beaucoup d'autres plaintes très-graves contre ce Capitoul. Elles ont été approfondies, et, comme ce n'est qu'en grande connaissance de cause que Sa Majesté a prononcé contre lui, ce serait inutilement qu'on lui proposerait de révoquer sa décision. »

D'autres torts plus graves encore ont été reprochés à David, mais sans preuves suffisantes. (Voir la note 5 à la fin du volume.)

d'avoir instrumenté contre lui, à lui faire des excuses solennelles et à trois mois de suspension<sup>1</sup>. Cette vengeance épouvanta les gens de loi à tel point que nous verrons la famille Calas chercher en vain, dans le cours du procès, un procureur qui voulût agir pour elle.

Il nous reste à expliquer la nature des pouvoirs étendus que David exerçait à Toulouse.

Tandis qu'ailleurs les conseillers municipaux portaient le titre d'Échevins, Toulouse, qui se vantait de conserver les traditions romaines, nommait les siens Capitouls, et sa maison de ville porte encore le titre fastueux de Capitole. Il est dit, dans la légende du patron de la ville, saint Sernin ou Saturnin, qu'il fut jugé au Capitole de Toulouse par les magistrats romains; et l'on tenait à conserver ce nom qui rappelait à la fois Rome païenne et la légende catholique. Les Capitouls n'étaient pas seulement chargés de l'administration et de la police municipales; ils avaient « haute et basse justice dans la ville et son gardiage » ou territoire. Des documents d'époques très-diverses, telles que les paroles de Coras au seizième siècle, citées en tête de ce chapitre, et un *Discours* de Charles Lagane au dix-huitième, signalent les usurpations de pouvoir, l'outrage et le peu de capacité judiciaire de ces étranges magistrats.

En effet, un des principaux acteurs dans le drame sanglant des Calas, le plus zélé complice de David, le procureur du roi Charles Lagane, avait écrit (avant de devenir Capitoul lui-même) un *Discours contenant l'histoire des jeux Floraux et celle de Dame Clémence*<sup>2</sup>. Il y prouvait que le titre légal et ancien des Capitouls était celui de *Consules Tolosæ*, et qu'on les appela *Capitulares* parce

1. Voir sa quatrième lettre au comte de Saint-Florentin. (Pièces just. XXI.)

2. Voir la note 6.



qu'ils formaient un *chapitre*, Capitulum. En langue romane, ils étaient appelés *Senhors de Capitols*, c'est-à-dire Messieurs du Chapitre. C'est ce terme de *Capitols* qui, généralement admis et mal traduit, donna lieu au changement de *Capitulum* en *Capitolium*. Ce dernier mot est encore inscrit au-dessous du fronton de l'hôtel de ville.

Dans ce même *Discours*, Charles Lagane accusait ses futurs collègues d'un orgueil ridicule ; à l'en croire, ils regardaient la magistrature dont ils étaient revêtus « comme la plus éminente de l'Europe (p. 100). »

Les titres officiels qu'ils s'attribuaient étaient ceux-ci : « Capitouls, Gouverneurs de la ville de Toulouse, « chefs des nobles, juges des causes civiles, criminelles, « et de la police et voyerie, en ladite ville, et gardiage « d'icelle. »

« Rien n'était plus magnifique, dit M. de Bastard, que le costume des Capitouls. L'ancien manteau comtal, selon l'expression consacrée, recouvrait une robe mi-partie de noir et d'écarlate, doublée de satin blanc, avec manchettes, cravate ou rabat de dentelles ; sur l'épaule était l'ancien chaperon de chevalier, divisé en lames ou létices d'or et de fourrure d'hermine ; une toque à plumes blanches servait de coiffure, etc. <sup>1</sup>. »

Les Capitouls étaient au nombre de huit, et ce corps s'appelait *Consistoire* ; un d'entre eux était *Chef du Consistoire*. En 1761, ce chef était Jean-Pierre-Bertrand Faget, avocat, que nous verrons seconder David dans ses excès de zèle. Parmi les huit membres du Consistoire, il y avait ordinairement deux ou trois Capitouls *titulaires*, c'est-à-dire ayant acheté leurs charges. La ville leur payait 1200 livres pour l'intérêt annuel de leur argent. Sauf pour ces derniers, les fonctions de Capitoul étaient temporaires et électives.

1. *Les Parlements de France*, t. I, p. 65.

Tous les ans, les membres sortants présentaient chacun trois candidats à un collège électoral formé des anciens Capitouls et des représentants de tous les corps d'état, de l'Université et du Parlement. Sur les vingt-quatre noms présentés par le Consistoire sortant, cette assemblée en choisissait huit, qui étaient soumis à l'approbation royale. S'ils n'étaient nobles, ils le devenaient de droit, et recevaient du roi leurs armoiries en même temps que la confirmation de leur dignité.

David était Capitoul *titulaire*. Il resta en charge de 1748 à 1765; il avait même obtenu en 1752 un arrêt du Conseil qui l'autorisait à remplir les fonctions du Capitoulat en l'absence de ses collègues. Selon un Mémoire inédit de La Beaumelle, cette ordonnance excita de grandes jalousies et ne fut enregistrée ni *au Sénéchal* ni au Parlement.

On conçoit que ce privilège et l'inamovibilité augmentèrent de beaucoup son importance, son orgueil, et lui donnèrent le moyen de parler et d'agir en maître dans les rues de Toulouse.

Il ne nous reste plus, pour exposer cette organisation qui, comme on le voit, n'était pas seulement municipale, qu'à faire mention des *Assesseurs* des Capitouls, collègues qu'ils s'adjoignaient eux-mêmes comme officiers de justice et police, mais qu'ils pouvaient toujours destituer et tenaient entièrement dans leur dépendance. Nous en verrons un, M<sup>e</sup> Monyer, pour avoir témoigné de la pitié aux Calas, tomber dans la disgrâce de ses collègues ou plutôt de ses maîtres, et renoncer malgré lui à prendre part au procès.

Le Capitole de Toulouse possède encore ses annales, énormes volumes de parchemin où chaque Consistoire, avant de sortir de charge, rendait compte de sa gestion. C'est un fait extrêmement remarquable que dans le récit de 1762, il ne soit fait aucune mention du supplice de Jean Calas, et que cette année 1761, où les

Capitouls le firent arrêter avec sa famille et commirent, dans l'instruction de la cause, une multitude de fautes, par ignorance des lois, précipitation et parti pris, cette année 1761 est demeurée en blanc dans le volume où elle devait être racontée. Les feuillets de parchemin qui devaient porter ce déplorable récit existent, mais sont demeurés muets, et leur silence se joint à la voix de l'histoire pour accuser ce tribunal inepte et odieux<sup>1</sup>. Ces juges iniques semblent ainsi joindre leur propre suffrage à ceux de leurs adversaires et de la postérité pour se condamner eux-mêmes.

Tel fut le tribunal dont David était l'âme et qui allait prononcer sur la vie et l'honneur des cinq détenus de l'hôtel de ville.

Avant de raconter la procédure instruite contre eux, il est nécessaire de les faire mieux connaître eux-mêmes.

1. Voir la note 7 à la fin du volume.



## CHAPITRE III.

### LA FAMILLE CALAS.

*In hoc tanto, tam atroci, tam singulari maleficio, quod ita raro exilit, ut si quando auditum sit, portentis ac prodigii simile numeretur, quibus tandem te argumentis accusatorem censes uti oportere? Nonne et audaciam ejus qui in crimen vocetur, singularem ostendere, et mores feros, immanemque naturam?*

CICERO pro Rosc. Amer., n. 13.

Vous qui portez une accusation si énorme, si atroce, si hors de l'ordinaire, qui s'est présentée si rarement qu'on dut la compter au nombre des événements prodigieux et hors nature, si jamais on en ouït parler, quels sont enfin les arguments dont vous pensez devoir vous servir? Ne faudra-t-il pas nous montrer en celui que vous accusez d'un tel crime, et une singulière audace, et des mœurs sauvages, et une âme dénaturée?

Le 14 octobre au matin, maître Faget assembla les Capitouls et rendit en consistoire l'ordonnance d'écrou. Jean Calas, sa femme et son fils Pierre, le jeune Lavaysse et même la servante, quoiqu'elle fût catholique, étaient accusés d'avoir étranglé Marc-Antoine par fanatisme protestant, et pour prévenir par le meurtre sa conversion au catholicisme. Cazeing fut renvoyé.

Il existe toujours une forte présomption, contre une imputation aussi abominable, si l'on prouve que le prévenu a un passé sans reproche, des habitudes douces et pures. Mais cette preuve devient bien plus certaine encore lorsqu'il s'agit de plusieurs accusés. Il n'est pas

impossible, sans doute, qu'on découvre un scélérat en un homme qui s'était acquis une estime imméritée. Mais cela est peu croyable pour cinq personnes à la fois, surtout quand elles diffèrent d'âge et de position, quand deux d'entre elles ne sont pas du même sang, quand une autre appartient à une Église rivale, et quand toutes sont inattaquables dans leur vie antérieure. Nous montrerons qu'on s'est épuisé en efforts pour leur inventer des crimes ou au moins leur prêter des menaces coupables, sans avoir pu donner le moindre fondement à ces calomnies. Leur conduite et leur caractère à tous sont demeurés sans tache.

Né en 1698 à La Cabarède, près de Castres, il y avait quarante ans que Jean Calas était venu s'établir à Toulouse, comme marchand d'indiennes. C'était un de ces hommes simples, laborieux et intègres, qui se créent lentement une fortune bornée mais irréprochable, et dont la religieuse droiture, la vertu sans éclat, étaient l'honneur des vieilles familles de bourgeois protestants. Si plus tard, en face de l'épreuve, au jour du martyre, il se trouva à la hauteur de sa cruelle destinée, c'est qu'une piété virile et un sentiment inflexible du devoir l'avaient préparé à tout.

Son caractère était aussi doux que grave. Un jeune homme qui avait été élevé chez lui attesta plus tard qu'en quatre années, il ne l'avait pas vu une seule fois en colère<sup>1</sup>.

L'avocat Sudre, dans son premier Mémoire, demanda l'autorisation de prouver que peu d'heures avant la

1. « J'atteste devant Dieu que j'ai demeuré pendant quatre ans à Toulouse, chez les sieur et dame Calas; que je n'ai jamais vu une famille plus unie, ni un père plus tendre, et que, dans l'espace de quatre années, il ne s'est pas mis une seule fois en colère; que si j'ai quelques sentiments d'honneur, de droiture et de modération, je les dois à l'éducation que j'ai reçue chez lui. — A Genève, 6 juillet 1762. — *Signé* : J. CALVET, caissier des postes de Suisse, d'Allemagne et d'Italie. » (L'original de cette pièce est aux Archives impériales.)

mort de Marc-Antoine, à six heures du soir, une demoiselle étant venue pour acheter une étoffe, Calas père envoya, *en lui parlant très-tendrement*, ce même Marc-Antoine chercher à l'étage supérieur la pièce d'étoffe que l'on demandait. La demoiselle ne fut pas interrogée et M<sup>e</sup> Sudre ne fut point admis à prouver le fait.

Après avoir lu avec soin les interrogatoires et les confrontations de Jean Calas, on reste convaincu que son esprit était solide sans être brillant, sa volonté consciencieuse et bien arrêtée. La conduite et les prétentions de deux de ses fils, Marc-Antoine et Louis, lui donnèrent souvent des soucis. Dans ses rapports quelquefois pénibles avec eux, on le voit toujours doux et paternel, mais inflexible dans sa résolution de rester seul maître de ses affaires, où le pain et l'honneur de la famille étaient engagés. On le voit aussi s'opposer invariablement, soit aux dépenses exagérées, soit aux entreprises commerciales où ces jeunes gens voulaient se lancer imprudemment. Honneur et fermeté, mais sans aucune rudesse, voilà en deux mots le caractère de Calas.

Il est nécessaire de remarquer que ce père, accusé d'avoir étranglé par fanatisme son propre fils, était au contraire, dans ses relations avec les catholiques, d'une facilité de mœurs et d'une tolérance assez rares alors. A cet égard les preuves abondent; il était si bien connu sous ce rapport, qu'en 1735, un catholique nommé Bonafous, juge de Ferrières et d'Espérausses, voulant placer ses deux filles dans le couvent des Religieuses de Notre-Dame à Toulouse, les confia à Calas, chez qui elles logèrent d'abord. Plus tard, des maladies fréquentes obligèrent l'aînée à sortir de ce couvent. Ce fut encore chez les époux Calas qu'elle passa plusieurs mois, à diverses reprises. Devenue la femme de J. Boulade, maire de Castelnau-de-Brassac, elle attesta ces faits, ainsi que sa sœur, dans deux certificats authenti-

ques<sup>1</sup>, et Mme Boulade y déclare que. « tandis qu'elle demeurait chez les sieur et dame Calas, elle y a rempli ses devoirs de catholicité, et fait ses pâques, en l'année 1757; que ledit Calas la faisait accompagner dans toutes les églises par des personnes de confiance. »

Nous retrouverons la même modération dans sa conduite avec Louis, celui de ses fils qui devint catholique, et plus encore envers la servante, qui l'avait aidé dans cet acte si pénible à ses parents.

Il n'est pas étonnant qu'une telle conduite eût valu à Calas le respect et même l'affection des catholiques sensés. Aussi n'était-il pas seulement en relations d'amitié avec ses coreligionnaires. Les papiers de famille, les dépositions du procès nous le montrent en rapports habituels avec des personnes des deux cultes et quelquefois même avec des prêtres.

Parmi les protestants, le marchand de Toulouse était plus considéré encore, et quoiqu'il ne jouît que d'une fortune très-limitée, nous le voyons, dans les châteaux du Languedoc, admis à la table des seigneurs<sup>2</sup>, dont quelques-uns le traitaient en ami et dont plusieurs étaient ses alliés par son mariage.

Il avait épousé à Paris, en 1731, une femme qui lui était supérieure par l'étendue de l'esprit, et qui était digne de lui par sa force d'âme et l'élévation de son caractère. Anne-Rose Cabibel était Anglaise de naissance, mais Française de race. Elle appartenait à ces familles de huguenots que Louis XIV contraignit à l'exil, après les avoir ruinées. Sa mère se nommait Rose de Roux, et sa grand'mère était une La Garde-Montesquieu. Le

1. Arch. imp. — Le juge Bonafous a donné lui-même une attestation toute conforme. D'autres témoins nombreux, notamment Houlès-Lagarigue et son fils, ont déposé dans le même sens. Ces certificats, qui existent encore aux Archives, ne furent produits, comme toutes les pièces ou dépositions à décharge, que plus tard, devant le grand Conseil et les maîtres des Requêtes.

2. Arch. imp.

marquis de Montesquieu, ainsi que les Polastron-Lahillère, étaient ses cousins issus de germains et elle était parente de quelques autres familles nobles du Languedoc et de plusieurs officiers supérieurs, chevaliers de Saint-Louis<sup>1</sup>. Ses amis s'en souvinrent pour elle, lorsqu'il fallut intéresser à elle le public et le gouvernement, lorsqu'elle portait en prison le deuil de son fils suicidé et de son mari exécuté à mort, étant elle-même, ainsi qu'un autre de ses fils, sous le poids d'une accusation capitale. Mais dans sa boutique de la rue des Filatiers, elle ne songeait guère à ses ancêtres, et si elle eut tout le courage des nobles d'autrefois, elle n'eut rien de leur vanité. Quand Voltaire la connut, elle lui inspira de l'étonnement et du respect, par son énergie calme, par la dignité de son caractère et une vigueur d'intelligence que rien n'avait pu abattre. Deux ans après la réhabilitation de Jean Calas, Voltaire écrivait encore à l'avocat Élie de Beaumont, au sujet de Sirven : « Je vous avertis que vous ne trouverez peut-être pas dans ce malheureux père de famille la même présence d'esprit, la même force, les mêmes ressources qu'on admirait dans Mme Calas<sup>2</sup>. »

Un homme qui avait été témoin de ses souffrances dans les moments les plus cruels, le jeune Lavaysse, lui écrivit à elle-même, le 22 février 1763 : « Je n'ai point été surpris de votre fermeté. Je l'avais vue dans votre âme; et la manière dont je vous ai vue supporter les chagrins les plus cuisants me fit bientôt apercevoir que les grands maux pourraient vous affliger, mais jamais vous abattre<sup>3</sup>. »

1. M. l'abbé Salvan cite les familles de Marsillac, de Saint-Amans, de Riols-Desmazier, d'Escalibert.

2. Lettre du 20 mars 1767. — Les adversaires des Calas ne peuvent prétendre qu'ici Voltaire veut tromper l'opinion publique. Il écrit, deux ans après la réhabilitation de Jean Calas, une lettre toute confidentielle à un avocat qui connaissait encore mieux que lui celle dont il parlait.

3. Collection de M. Fournier.



Voici sur Mme Calas l'opinion du plus récent accusateur de son mari, opinion qu'il s'est formée en lisant les interrogatoires et en consultant des traditions locales :

« Quoiqu'il régnât dans cette maison beaucoup d'ordre et d'économie, on y menait cependant une vie aisée et commode, telle que le demandait une bonne et honnête Lorigeaise. M. et Mme Calas exerçaient une grande autorité sur leurs enfants ; Mme Calas, en particulier, veillait beaucoup sur ses filles, dont elle ne se séparait que très-rarement ; elle avait de très-bonnes manières, et quoique femme d'un simple marchand, elle gardait assez le haut ton. »

(SALVAN, p. 7.)

Devant les juges, ses réponses et ses confrontations sont plus remarquables encore que celles de son mari, parce qu'elle discerne avec plus de pénétration et de présence d'esprit les pièges qu'on lui tend, proteste avec plus de résolution contre les témoignages faux ou mal intentionnés, et trouve, dans son cœur de mère, un degré de fermeté que rien n'égale. On leur répète sans cesse à tous deux que leur fils Marc-Antoine allait abjurer, qu'on en est sûr, que cela est prouvé. Jean Calas ne cesse de répondre qu'il n'en a jamais entendu parler que de la bouche de ses juges et qu'après la mort de son fils. Mme Calas déclare hardiment que cela ne peut être, que son fils était dans des sentiments tout contraires, qu'elle était sûre de lui : *Il n'aurait pas usé de dissimulation avec moi*, dit-elle<sup>1</sup>. On sent dans toutes ses paroles le cœur ému de la mère qui a trop connu, trop aimé ce fils si malheureux et si coupable, pour le laisser accuser après sa mort de ce qui serait à ses yeux un tort de plus.

Était-ce donc une fanatique huguenote que cette simple et noble mère de famille ? Loin de là. Elle eut part à tout ce que fit son mari pour les demoiselles Bonafous, pour la servante, coupable d'avoir entraîné son fils Louis à abjurer, pour ce fils lui-même. Tout ce qui lui est particulier à l'égard de ce fils, c'est ce qu'écrit un ami de la fa-

1. Arch. imp. — Confrontations de la demoiselle Calas.

mille nommé Griolet : qu'il « a vu plus d'une fois les yeux de Mme Calas se remplir de larmes, toutes les fois qu'elle le voyait passer devant la maison où il n'entrait plus<sup>1</sup>. » Elle en a donné elle-même le motif dans les termes les plus touchants<sup>2</sup> : « L'accusée répond qu'il est vrai que sa sensibilité se réveillait toutes les fois qu'elle voyait passer Louis Calas, son fils, *attendu que depuis quelque temps, il ne la reconnaissait plus pour sa mère.* »

Mme Calas, plus jeune que son mari, avait quarante-cinq à cinquante ans lors de la mort de son fils aîné<sup>3</sup>.

Leur famille se composait de six enfants, Marc-Antoine, Jean-Pierre, Donat-Louis, Anne-Rose, Anne (Nanette) et Jean-Louis-Donat, et d'une servante catholique, âgée de quarante-cinq ans environ, Jeanne Viguière<sup>4</sup>. C'est à dessein que je rapproche ainsi de ses maîtres cette fille dévouée, à qui vingt-quatre ans de services et une estime méritée avaient donné des privilèges, dont elle ne crut pas abuser en convertissant un des enfants de la maison<sup>5</sup>.

Il est inconcevable qu'on ait cru fanatiques jusqu'au

1. Arch. imp. — Lettre de Griolet.

2. *Ib.* — Confr. de la demoiselle Calas.

3. On la disait plus jeune de dix-huit ans que Calas, né en 1698. Elle se serait donc mariée à quinze ans (en 1731), ce qui alors était assez fréquent. D'un autre côté, comme, dans l'acte de sa sépulture, en 1792, on la dit âgée non de soixante-seize ans, mais de *quatre-vingt-deux ans* (voir Pièces just. XXXVIII), il est probable qu'il y avait moins de distance entre son âge et celui de son mari.

4. On l'appelait *Viguière*, suivant l'usage romain, qui s'est perpétué dans le patois languedocien, de donner à une fille le nom de son père avec une désinence féminine. Dans le midi de la France, on nomme *Viguière* la fille de Viguière, comme autrefois, à Rome, la fille de Marcus Tullius était Tullia.

5. On lui demande, dans le cours du procès, *comment elle a pu rester vingt-quatre ans chez des personnes d'une religion opposée à la sienne*. Il fallait donc que les protestants n'eussent point de domestiques, puisqu'une déclaration du roi leur ordonnait de n'en avoir que de catholiques, sous peine d'amende pour les maîtres et des galères pour les domestiques. (Déclaration du roi du 11 janvier 1686.) Viguière répond simplement que, *n'ayant jamais été gênée en rien, elle s'est bien trouvée de la condition*.

parricide, des gens qui gardaient chez eux et ne cessaient de traiter presque à l'égal d'un membre de leur propre famille, la servante qui, à leur insu et contre leur volonté expresse, avait travaillé et réussi à faire abjurer leur fils. Ce qui, peut-être, est plus étrange encore, c'est de voir cette même servante paraître devant quatre juridictions successives, sous l'absurde accusation d'avoir assassiné le frère aîné pour empêcher ou punir chez lui le même acte qu'elle avait fait accomplir par le cadet. Elle partagea tous les périls de sa maîtresse, lui resta inviolablement attachée jusqu'à son dernier jour et rendit encore un témoignage légal à la vérité en 1767. Par cette conduite réciproque de la domestique envers ses maîtres et de ses maîtres envers elle, par son dévouement à toute épreuve, par la liberté extrême que lui avaient valu ses excellents services, Viguière appartient à une classe de serviteurs dont on retrouve encore, et surtout dans nos provinces méridionales, quelques rares exemples.

« Il me semble, dit Voltaire, que ces célèbres avocats n'ont pas assez pesé sur le caractère de la servante. Cette fille est dans l'usage de se confesser deux fois la semaine ; elle a , par conséquent, la foi la plus parfaite pour la confession. Sans doute qu'elle a confessé et communie plusieurs fois depuis sa sortie de prison ; sans doute aussi que le confesseur lui a parlé de cette affaire. Si elle lui eût dit que Calas père eût pendu son fils, ce confesseur lui eût refusé l'absolution jusqu'à ce qu'elle en eût fait la déclaration aux juges. De là on peut conclure qu'elle a dit vrai dans ses réponses ; et le témoignage de cette fille, toutes les circonstances pesées, a autant de force, à mon avis, que jamais en eût eu celui de Caton. »

(Voir Lettres de Voltaire, notre Recueil, p. 187.)

C'était, en effet, une catholique très-fervente. Des certificats de ses confesseurs sont au procès<sup>1</sup> et prouvent qu'elle se confessait et communiait fréquemment. Au dire de Louis Calas<sup>2</sup>, elle entendait la messe tous les

1. Arch. imp. — 2. Décl. de L.-C.

jours et recevait la communion deux fois par semaine. Elle a persévéré toute sa vie dans ces habitudes de piété et elle est morte après avoir reçu tous les sacrements de son Église à l'âge d'environ quatre-vingt-dix ans. On a remarqué avec raison que si elle s'était obstinée, par un faux point d'honneur, à se parjurer sans cesse en déclarant ses maîtres innocents, elle n'eût pas manqué de l'avouer tôt ou tard au confessionnal; et sans aucun doute la communion lui aurait été refusée. Il n'en fut jamais rien. Supposera-t-on que ses divers confesseurs, à Toulouse et à Paris, aient commis de perpétuels sacrilèges dans l'intérêt des Calas et du protestantisme, en laissant communier toutes les semaines une fille qui se serait parjurée plus de cinquante fois par dévouement pour des hérétiques<sup>1</sup>?

Pour revenir de ces chimères à la réalité, disons simplement, à l'honneur de Viguière, que l'horreur du cachot, la menace sans cesse réitérée de la torture et de la mort, les souffrances qu'elle endura pendant quatre mois qu'elle eut les fers aux pieds, les promesses de pardon et de récompense, rien ne put la décider à accuser ses maîtres pour se sauver elle-même. Elle était digne d'eux.

Nous ne pouvons en dire autant de tous leurs fils. Marc-Antoine, l'aîné, dont le corps mort fut porté à l'hôtel de ville le 13 octobre 1761, était né le 5 novembre 1732, et par conséquent mourut âgé de vingt-huit à vingt-neuf ans. Par ambition, par goût pour les études et les professions lettrées, il voulut embrasser une autre carrière que celle du commerce. Il se croyait, non sans raison, quelque talent oratoire. Il avait étudié en

1. A chaque interrogatoire, recolement et confrontation, les accusés comme les témoins prêtaient serment de dire la vérité. On peut se figurer combien ce serment fut répété dans ce procès quatre fois jugé. Un écrivain contemporain qui ne s'est pas nommé, mais qui se montra fort éclairé, a trouvé comme Voltaire, que, dans leurs factums, les défenseurs n'insistèrent pas assez sur la haute valeur du témoignage de Viguière.

droit et fut reçu bachelier par bénéfice d'âge le 18 mai 1759. Un sieur Vidal le prépara pour soutenir les actes nécessaires à la licence. Mais, au moment de prendre le titre d'avocat, il se vit arrêté par un obstacle invincible qui le força malgré lui à se renfermer dans la boutique de son père et à l'aider dans ses occupations. Pour être reçu avocat, un certificat de catholicité était indispensable. Quelquefois les pièces de ce genre étaient données par complaisance et sans examen. Dix-huit mois avant son suicide, Marc-Antoine était allé demander un certificat de catholicité à l'abbé Boyer, curé de la cathédrale et de la paroisse qu'habitaient les Calas. Au moment où le curé allait donner à Marc-Antoine l'acte qu'il sollicitait, son domestique<sup>1</sup> le prévint que ce jeune homme était protestant. Le curé, ainsi averti, refusa le certificat, et exigea pour condition une attestation signée d'un prêtre auquel Marc-Antoine se serait confessé et qui répondît de sa bonne foi<sup>2</sup>. Ce refus jeta le jeune homme dans un amer chagrin. Tous ses rêves s'écroulaient devant la nécessité d'un acte qu'il ne voulait pas accomplir.

Un jour qu'il était debout devant la boutique, il vit passer M<sup>e</sup> Beaux, son condisciple, qui revenait du palais où il avait été reçu, à l'instant même, avocat au Parlement. Beaux lui demanda : « Quand veux-tu en faire autant ? » Il répondit que c'était impossible « parce qu'il ne voulait faire aucun acte de catholicité<sup>3</sup>. » Profondément affligé de se voir ainsi fermer la carrière qu'il avait rêvée, Marc-Antoine chercha en vain quelle

1. Sudre, I. — 2. Déclaration du curé de Saint-Étienne.

3. Arch. — Dép. de M<sup>e</sup> Beaux, interpellé par huissier à la requête des Calas.

Il est probable que l'avocat Beaux, ami de Marc-Antoine, est le même que nous trouvons nommé dans les papiers de La Beaumelle et qui était très-lié avec ce dernier et avec son frère. Il était né à Saint-Jean-du-Gard, et périt à Nîmes, sur l'échafaud, en 1794.

Selon M. l'abbé Salvan, la promesse que fit le curé à Marc-Antoine

autre profession il pourrait adopter. Toutes lui étaient interdites par quelque *Déclaration du Roi*<sup>1</sup>.

Il essaya alors, non sans une vive répugnance, de se tourner vers le commerce qu'il avait le tort de dédaigner, mais qui était sa seule ressource. Il allait s'associer avec un marchand d'Alais, lorsque l'impossibilité de fournir à temps un cautionnement de 6000 livres lui en fit manquer l'occasion. Il voulut devenir l'associé en titre de son père, qui n'y consentit point, quoique depuis quatre ans il l'eût initié à toutes ses affaires et se fût partout représenter par lui, le regardant, dit-il, comme un second lui-même. L'intérêt de toute sa famille lui interdisait absolument de donner des pouvoirs trop étendus à un fils qui n'avait aucune aptitude pour le négoce et chez qui des goûts dangereux de jeu et d'oisiveté se développaient toujours davantage. En effet, irrité contre le présent et sans espérance pour l'avenir, ce malheureux jeune homme devint joueur; les témoins nous le dépeignent passant au jeu de paume ou de billard tous les moments dont il pouvait disposer. Non-seulement il y était presque toujours l'après-midi des dimanches et fêtes, mais il y retournait chaque jour après le souper de famille. Il y jouait, pour un homme de sa condition, assez gros jeu, jusqu'à perdre quelquefois, dit un témoin, 6 fr., 12 fr. et même un louis. Le jour de sa mort s'était passé presque entièrement au billard et au jeu de paume. Un autre témoin<sup>2</sup> l'avait vu jusque vers sept heures dans l'établissement des Quatre-Billards. Il est certain que, dans cette même journée, son père l'avait chargé de changer des écus contre des louis, qu'il n'en rendit pas compte, et que cet argent n'a point été retrouvé.

de lui donner un acte de catholicité dès qu'il aurait un billet de confession, dut être un *puissant appât* pour Marc-Antoine. Mais c'était lui promettre simplement ce qu'on n'aurait pu lui refuser. Il n'y avait rien là qui fût nouveau ou inattendu.

1. Voir la note 8.

2. Mathey. — Arch. imp.

Nous avons dit qu'il portait dans ses poches, au moment de sa mort<sup>1</sup>, des vers et des chansons obscènes.

Cette mauvaise conduite ne l'empêchait nullement d'être, seul de sa famille, intolérant et enclin au fanatisme. Sa religion était sombre comme son caractère. Un prêtre a déclaré l'avoir entendu soutenir qu'on ne pouvait être sauvé dans l'Église romaine, et que tout catholique était éternellement damné<sup>2</sup>. Aussi montrait-il souvent une irritation amère au sujet de la conversion de son frère Louis. Nous en citerons un exemple attesté par le chanoine Azimond, et il serait facile d'en indiquer bien d'autres. « Je l'ai entendu, écrivit plus tard à Nanette Calas le négociant Griolet<sup>3</sup>, se fâcher du changement de religion de monsieur votre frère Louis. » Louis lui-même rapporte que lorsqu'il interrogea son frère, le 12 octobre, sur le paiement de son trimestre de pension, Marc-Antoine lui répondit brusquement : « *Ce ne sont pas mes affaires; vous n'avez qu'à faire comme vous pourrez.* » Le 8 janvier 1761, il écrivit à Cazeing, à propos de Donat pour lequel on demandait de l'argent : « Je parlerai à mon père pour lui, quoique nous soyons dans une circonstance critique, puisque nous ressentons beaucoup la misère du temps; et de l'autre côté, notre déserteur nous tracasse. Il veut nous faire contribuer et il agit par la force; ceci soit entre nous<sup>4</sup>. »

« Le père, très-hon, dit le témoin Alquier<sup>5</sup>, faisait souvent la guerre à Marc-Antoine sur son caractère sombre et mélancolique qui le rendait triste et taciturne, et l'empêchait de prendre part aux amusements innocents que l'on faisait dans la maison. Il paraissait toujours rempli de tout autre objet que de ceux qui faisaient la matière de la conversation, étant la plupart du temps assis seul à l'écart pendant que les autres s'amusaient. » Le chagrin violent de voir la carrière se

1. Procès-verbal de David, etc. — 2. Arch. imp. — 3. *Ib.*

4. E. de B., 1. — 5. Arch. imp.

fermer pour lui au moment d'y entrer, le dégoût continu des occupations auxquelles il se voyait contraint, son amour-propre blessé et son humeur morose lui donnèrent l'idée du suicide. Il était fort adonné à la lecture, et relisait souvent dans Plutarque et dans Montaigne ce qu'ils ont dit pour excuser ou louer le suicide<sup>1</sup>. Il aimait les belles poésies, les déclamaient avec plaisir, et avait eu du succès comme acteur dans la représentation de quelques tragédies que les jeunes gens de Toulouse organisèrent alors. C'était le temps où l'exemple de Voltaire mettait partout en vogue les théâtres de société. Mais on ne remarqua que plus tard quels étaient les rôles où Marc-Antoine avait brillé, les vers qu'il aimait à redire. Un témoin hostile aux Calas, P.-J. Mirepoix, dépose qu'il montrait beaucoup de ferveur en jouant le rôle de Polyeucte, surtout dans la scène III<sup>e</sup> du V<sup>e</sup> acte. Ce témoin, qui paraît peu intelligent, s' imagine voir dans cette ferveur la preuve d'un certain penchant pour le catholicisme, parce que cette scène contient une allusion à la messe ; il serait facile de répliquer en montrant dans ce rôle d'iconoclaste bien des traits qui pouvaient plaire à un huguenot passionné ; tout ce qu'on y dit des persécutions de l'empereur Décie pouvait, aussi bien que l'*Esther* de Racine, donner lieu à mainte allusion au sort des réformés de France. Il faut remarquer enfin que la scène où l'on admirait Marc-Antoine est celle où Polyeucte s'obstine à demander la mort malgré les instances de Pauline et de Félix. — Un autre témoin, Jean Capoulac, l'a entendu répétant une scène de *Polyeucte* avec le sieur Juvenel, son ami (catholique). Marc-Antoine était Polyeucte, et Juvenel, « l'idolâtre, son beau-père. Ledit Calas avait le cœur si navré du rôle qu'il récitait, qu'il paraissait en verser des larmes. » Antoine Delpech rapporte qu'il

1. Confrontations de Mme Calas.



avait réellement les larmes aux yeux en declamant. D'autres témoins ont observé l'effet qu'il produisait en récitant les stances de Polyeucte. On sait que l'idée qui y domine est aussi celle de la mort, au-devant de laquelle le héros va courir, et qu'il invoque de tous ses vœux en la nommant *l'heureux trépas que j'attends*.

C'est dans le même esprit que Marc-Antoine débitait souvent avec emphase une mauvaise traduction du monologue de Hamlet sur la mort et quelques fragments du *Sidney* de Gresset, qui sont la glorification du suicide :

« Qu'auriez-vous fait vous-même ? Aux ennuis condamné,  
 Accablé du fardeau d'une tristesse extrême,  
 Réduit au sort affreux d'être à charge à moi-même,  
 J'épargne aux yeux d'autrui l'objet fastidieux  
 D'homme ennuyé partout et partout ennuyeux...  
 J'étais lassé de vivre et je brise ma chaîne...  
 Ma funeste existence est un poids qui m'accable...  
 Ce n'est point seulement insensibilité,  
 Dégoût de l'univers à qui le sort me lie ;  
 C'est ennui de moi-même, et haine de ma vie ;  
 C'est un brûlant désir d'anéantissement.  
 Je les ai combattus, mais inutilement ;  
 Cette haine, attachée aux restes de mon être,  
 A pris un ascendant dont je ne suis plus maître ;  
 Mon cœur, mes sens flétris, ma funeste raison,  
 Tout me dit d'abrégier le temps de ma prison.  
 Faut-il donc sans honneur attendre la vieillesse,  
 Trainant pour tout destin les regrets, la faiblesse ;  
 Pour objet éternel l'affreuse vérité,  
 Et pour tout sentiment l'ennui d'avoir été ?  
 C'est au stupide, au lâche, à plier sous la peine,  
 A ramper, à vieillir sous le poids de sa chaîne ;  
 Mais vous en conviendrez, quand on sait réfléchir,  
 Malheureux sans remède, on doit savoir finir.  
 D'ailleurs, que suis-je au monde ? Une faible partie  
 Peut bien, sans nuire au tout, en être désunie :  
 A la société je ne fais aucun tort ;  
 Tout ira comme avant ma naissance et ma mort.

(Act. I. Sc. 2. — Act. II, Sc. 6. Voir aussi Act. III. Sc. 1.)

Ces vers, que Marc-Antoine se plaisait à répéter<sup>1</sup>, lui

1. Lav. 2, etc.

offraient bien des points de comparaison avec la situation où il languissait. Peut-être, ce mot alors fameux, *un brûlant désir d'anéantissement*, était présent à sa pensée, lorsqu'un instant avant son suicide, il répondit à Jeanne Viguié, qui l'engageait à venir se chauffer : « Je brûle. » Mais quelle fatale erreur il a commise, s'il s'est appliqué ce vers mensonger : *Tout ira comme avant ma naissance et ma mort !* Sans doute, il ne se serait pas tué s'il avait prévu à quelle fin horrible il condamnait son père, et quels longs malheurs il attirait sur tous les siens ; tant il est impossible de n'être coupable qu'envers soi-même !

Le temps n'était pas encore venu où le suicide devint une mode littéraire et où les malheurs, imaginaires ou coupables, d'un Werther et d'un René bouleversèrent les esprits faibles. Mais les maladies du cœur humain changent de nom plutôt que de nature ; elles se trouvent, au fond, les mêmes à toutes les époques, et il ne faut pas trop s'étonner « qu'un jeune homme sans état et sans espérance, végétant plein d'ambition à côté du comptoir paternel<sup>1</sup>, » tombât de l'orgueil froissé dans le désespoir. Un écrivain moderne, M. Huc, prétend sérieusement que la mélancolie de Marc-Antoine est une invention de Voltaire. Il n'a donc pas lu l'art. 7 du *Monitoire*, où les accusateurs des Calas disent eux-mêmes officiellement qu'il était *triste et mélancolique* et où ils attribuent cette mélancolie à la peur qu'il aurait eue d'être tué par ses parents ? Cette humeur noire, constatée ainsi par l'accusation elle-même dans un des premiers actes du procès et dans le plus hostile de tous, a été confirmée en outre par une foule de témoignages. Pierre, interrogé si son frère était rêveur, pendant le souper qui précéda sa mort, répondit naïvement : « *Pas plus que de coutume.* » Il aurait eu un intérêt évident à ré-

1. Ch. Coquerel, *Églises du Désert*.

pondre tout le contraire, mais le mot est d'autant plus significatif.

M. Salvan, dans sa réfutation du présent ouvrage, convient, en plus d'un endroit, de la tristesse habituelle de Marc-Antoine; mais il se contredit; tantôt il le représente (p. 65) « passant doucement sa vie et préparant son avenir; » tantôt il demande naïvement : « D'où venaient les souffrances de ce malheureux enfant, si ce n'est des menaces de son père (p. 42)? » Et c'est ainsi qu'on écrit l'histoire !

Peu de jours avant sa déplorable fin, Marc-Antoine dit à un de ses amis nommé Challier, avocat au parlement, qu'il avait un nouveau projet : aller à Genève, étudier pour le saint ministère et revenir se consacrer au service des Églises réformées de France. Mais Challier répondit « que tout métier qui faisait pendre son homme ne valait rien <sup>1</sup>. » En effet, dans le moment même où il parlait, le pasteur François Rochette était en prison et attendait le supplice. Marc-Antoine appartenait à cette sorte de caractères, sans énergie mais non sans violence, qui aiment mieux en finir par le suicide que lutter et souffrir patiemment, et il est permis de n'ajouter aucune foi à sa vocation pour le saint ministère. A ce mot de son ami, il se leva et sortit, en disant : « Eh bien ! je pense à une autre chose, que j'exécuterai. » Il tint parole.

Son frère, Jean-Pierre, nous occupera peu, quoiqu'il ait eu sa large part des souffrances de la famille. C'est lui surtout que David regardait comme l'assassin; il était évident, en effet, qu'un homme de vingt-huit ans ne pouvait avoir été étranglé par un vieillard : « *C'est toi,* » lui répétait le Capitoul, « *c'est toi qui as tué ton frère.* » Nous verrons que, par suite de ces soupçons, il eut matériellement à souffrir, plus que sa mère, ses

1. Voir plus loin le texte complet de cette déposition de M<sup>e</sup> Challier, au ch. VII : *Les Calas devant le Parlement.*

frères et ses sœurs. Mais c'est une grande et commune erreur de croire qu'à elle seule la souffrance est ce qui intéresse le plus ; par elle-même, elle ne peut exciter que la pitié ; ce qui attendrit, ce qui émeut, ce qui est digne d'attendrir et d'émouvoir, c'est la souffrance héroïquement supportée. Ce fils de martyr n'était pas d'une forte nature. Médiocre d'intelligence et nul de caractère, il n'a rien de grand, ni le cœur ni l'esprit. Il en convenait, au moins devant sa mère, avec une franchise qui désarme : « Vous connaissez mon petit génie qui ne me permet pas de mettre au jour par des traits énergiques ce que mon cœur et ma reconnaissance me dictent ; ce qui fait, le plus souvent, que je reste bouche close. Mais soyez assurée que cela ne provient pas, faute de sentiment, mais bien faute d'esprit<sup>1</sup>. » A peine lui reprocherons-nous d'avoir abjuré par peur dans le couvent où il fut enfermé ; il n'y gagna rien, s'enfuit dès qu'il le put et se hâta de rétracter sa prétendue conversion. Dans toute sa conduite et dans ses réponses devant les tribunaux, s'il y a peu à blâmer, il n'y a rien à louer.

Le troisième fils des Calas, Donat-Louis, né le 11 octobre 1739, doit nous arrêter plus longtemps : son rôle dans toute cette histoire est peu honorable. Il prit souvent la défense de ses parents, mais sans suite et sans courage. Un juge qui ne peut être suspect à personne, la religieuse Anne-Julie Fraïsse, qui montra tant d'estime à la famille Calas, n'avait mauvaise opinion que d'un seul de ses membres, celui qui, étant devenu catholique, avait le plus de titres à son intérêt. Il venait souvent voir sa sœur au couvent et il était bien connu de la vénérable Visitandine. Elle parle de lui avec une défiance et un dédain qui sans doute seraient plus marqués encore, si elle ne s'adressait à sa propre

1. 14 mars 1763, collection de M. Fournier.

sœur<sup>1</sup>. Voltaire ne l'aimait pas plus que la religieuse : « Ce malheureux Louis Calas fait soulever le cœur, » écrivait-il à Debrus<sup>2</sup>. Sa cupidité précoce n'est que trop avouée et malheureusement tout paraît suspect dans sa carrière, depuis les étranges circonstances de sa conversion au catholicisme en 1759, jusqu'au certificat d'excellent jacobin que Barrère lui décerna du haut de la tribune de la Convention en 1792. La longue série des pièces imprimées qui parurent dans cette affaire s'ouvre par une *Déclaration du sieur Louis Calas*<sup>3</sup>, datée du 2 décembre 1761, qu'il fit suivre quelques semaines plus tard d'un *Mémoire justificatif pour le sieur Louis Calas, de Toulouse*<sup>4</sup>. Lui-même, dans ces pièces, ne se peint nullement en beau. Elles sont une sorte de confession (qui aurait plus de prix si, sous l'humiliation des aveux, on sentait se relever la dignité morale et le repentir. Son histoire commence par des contestations d'argent avec son père.

Tout nous démontre que Jean Calas, par la juste considération dont il jouissait, et sa femme, par ses relations de parenté, occupaient un rang fort modeste sans doute, mais fort au-dessus de leur très-faible fortune et de la situation qu'avaient des marchands en boutique. Seize ans avant les faits qui nous occupent, leurs affaires s'étaient trouvées fort embarrassées, mais Calas avait obtenu

1. Voir la cinquième lettre de la sœur Fraisse : « Je profite du départ de M. votre frère, qui dit devoir partir demain par la Mesagerie. Je dis *qui dit*; la confiance ne dépend point de soy, vous savés que je n'en ay pas de reste, et vous avés bien voulu avoir la bonté de me le passer. » Dans la lettre suivante, elle dit de lui : *M. votre frère, en qui, vous sàrés, ie n'ay jamais eu confiance*, etc., etc.

Court de Gébelin (dans les *Toulousaines*) accuse Louis d'avoir paru en habit vert dans les rues de Toulouse après la mort de son père ; si le fait est vrai, ce n'est pas que Louis fût insensible à un si terrible malheur ; c'est que le fils du condamné n'aura pas osé porté son deuil. Mais une présomption très-plausible contre cette anecdote, c'est qu'avant la mort de son père, il portait déjà le deuil de Marc-Antoine.

2. *Lettres*, notre recueil, p. 52. — 3. Bibliogr. n° 1. — 4. Bibliogr. n° 8.

du Parlement<sup>1</sup> un arrêt qui obligeait ses créanciers à s'entendre avec lui, et rendait valables les conditions d'arrangement qu'il leur offrait. Ses enfants avaient reçu une éducation supérieure à celle des jeunes gens de la même classe et n'étaient pas demeurés fidèles aux goûts austères de leurs parents. Une sœur de l'avocat Carrière avait été en pension avec les demoiselles Calas, et a souvent raconté depuis, que « les compagnes de ces jeunes filles leur reprochaient d'être trop élégantes, trop *fig nolées*, et de faire venir à la pension le perruquier pour se faire coiffer à la mode<sup>2</sup>. »

On a vu que Marc-Antoine avait étudié pour devenir avocat et dédaignait le commerce; il est évident que ce dernier et Louis avaient de hautes prétentions que leur père eut raison de ne pas satisfaire. Tantôt tous deux lui demandaient quelques milliers de francs pour s'établir, et c'était plus qu'il ne pouvait leur donner; tantôt ils voulaient, l'un ou l'autre, un habit de couleur claire. Comme l'a remarqué Arthur Young, dans son *Voyage en France*, à cette époque où la noblesse perdait chaque jour de son prestige et où le luxe des vêtements devenait la distinction suprême, les habits noirs ou gris étaient le signe d'une position inférieure, et quiconque avait de l'argent à *mettre sur soi*, comme on disait alors, portait l'habit ou tout au moins la veste et la culotte de couleurs vives et tranchées. Aussi voyons-nous sans cesse reparaître dans les exigences de Louis ou de Marc-Antoine la demande d'un habit plus éclatant. Leur père leur en promet de tout pareils, en drap bleu, avec des boutons de métal; ils en portaient alors de drap gris, avec des boutons de pinchebeck, entièrement semblables du reste; circonstance qui a, comme on le verra, son importance au

1. J'ai vu cet arrêt dans la collection de M. Fournier.

2. Renseignements donnés par les descendants de Carrière.

procès. Ces puérils griefs, ces vanités et ces impatiences de jeune homme donnèrent lieu plus d'une fois à des discussions entre les fils et le père.

Depuis la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes, les enfants d'un protestant étaient armés contre lui, par les édits royaux, d'incroyables privilèges, pourvu qu'ils se fissent catholiques, et ils le pouvaient légalement dès l'âge de sept ans. Lorsqu'ils réclamaient une pension alimentaire, le taux en était arbitrairement établi par les autorités catholiques<sup>1</sup>. On répondra que des enfants ignoraient tous ces avantages. Mais trop souvent, presque toujours, il se trouvait auprès d'eux des gens très-disposés à agir pour eux. La loi, nous l'avons vu, interdisait aux protestants d'avoir chez eux des domestiques de leur culte, et il arrivait sans cesse que des serviteurs catholiques, dirigés par leur confesseurs, venaient à bout de séduire les enfants confiés à leur soins. Ce fut le cas de Louis Calas, que Viguière avait vu naître; ni lui ni elle ne l'ont nié; mais ce qu'ils ne disent pas, ce que le père et surtout la mère ont déclaré devant la justice maintes fois avec une grande chaleur<sup>2</sup>, c'est qu'en toute cette affaire Louis, très-jeune alors, fut dirigé par leurs plus proches voisins, autrefois leurs amis, le perruquier Durand, sa femme et l'abbé Durand, leur fils, que Jean Calas appelle *son mortel ennemi*, et enfin l'abbé Benaben, ami de ce dernier<sup>3</sup>. Ce sont eux, dit-il, qui ont fait faire par Louis ses placets au ministre; ce sont eux qui l'empêchèrent

1. La déclaration du roi du 17 juin 1681 donnait aux enfants de parents protestants, dès l'âge de sept ans, le triple droit d'abjurer, de quitter la maison paternelle et de réclamer de leurs parents une pension.

2. Interr. et confr. de J. Calas et de la Dlle Calas.

3. Je n'ai pu trouver la date précise de la conversion de Louis. Mais, comme l'archevêque François de Crussol-d'Uzès-d'Amboise mourut en 1758, cette affaire, où il intervint, datait de quatre ans au moins, à la fin de 1761, et Louis ne pouvait avoir, au plus, que vingt ans. D'après d'Aldéguier, il n'en avait pas encore dix-huit. Ailleurs, le même écrivain lui en donne environ dix-neuf.

Pénétré des sentiments de ma nouvelle religion, mon zèle trop ardent me porta à méditer un projet dont mon père eut très lieu d'être fâché : j'osai adresser un placet, sans l'en avertir, à Mr l'Intendant, dans lequel je lui demandais sans sujet, de m'obtenir du Roi des ordres pour me séquestrer, ensemble avec mes sœurs et mon frère Jean-Louis-Donat. Je laissai imprudemment tomber de ma poche cet écrit téméraire. Marc-Antoine mon frère s'en saisit. C'était un jour que j'étais dans le magasin de mon père; j'essuyai de la part de mon malheureux frère, sur cette entreprise, des reproches amers, et surtout contre mon inexpérience et mon ingratitude envers un père qui ne me refusait rien pour mon avancement.

Honteux de ces reproches mérités, il n'osa pas affronter la douleur de sa mère et la juste indignation d'un père si vivement offensé. Il s'enfuit chez ses amis Durand, et se ménagea des intelligences avec Viguière, qui lui donnait des nouvelles de sa famille et même lui porta de l'argent<sup>1</sup>. Il se tint caché pendant quelque temps chez les dames Peyre et Larroque. De là il négociait avec son père. La conversion d'un protestant était encore à cette époque un mérite dont chacun se faisait gloire et qui pouvait devenir avantageux. Un conseiller au Parlement, M. Delamote, à qui l'on fit honneur de cette abjuration, se chargea d'aller l'annoncer à sa famille<sup>2</sup>. Jean Calas, éclairé par la découverte du placet, ne pouvait que s'y attendre et ne devait pas trop regretter la présence dangereuse d'un fils qui avait tenté de se venger de ses refus, en lui faisant enlever ses quatre enfants mineurs; de pareilles demandes avaient toujours grande chance d'être écoutées. Le père répondit froidement au conseiller Delamote, par ces paroles aussi simples que dignes : « J'ap-  
« prouve la conversion de mon fils, si elle est sincère.  
« Prétendre de gêner les consciences ne sert jamais  
« qu'à faire de parfaits hypocrites qui finissent par  
« n'avoir aucune religion<sup>3</sup>. »

1. Confrontation de Jeanne Viguière.

2. Voir, sur ce personnage, la note 9 à la fin du volume.

3. Déclaration de Louis Calas.



Il est remarquable que les Calas, lorsqu'on les accusa plus tard d'avoir persécuté Louis, qui ne rentra jamais chez eux, demandèrent toujours en vain qu'on fît citer M. Delamote, pour rendre compte de ce qu'il avait vu et entendu. Ce témoignage, trop favorable, fut systématiquement écarté; c'eût été un scandale aux yeux des juges qu'un membre du Parlement parût, dans cette cause, comme témoin à décharge.

La négociation entre Louis et son père, toujours par intermédiaires, se prolongea. Calas lui envoya tous ses effets, et lui fit faire l'habit qu'il demandait, pareil à celui de son frère aîné. Mais il voulait avec raison éloigner son fils des Durand, et il lui avait trouvé une place à Nîmes chez un catholique, fabricant de bas. Louis, soutenu par ses conseillers<sup>1</sup>, refusa obstinément de quitter Toulouse, probablement parce qu'il voulait la victoire entière. Il l'eut. Il attendit patiemment le retour de l'archevêque, absent. M. de Crussol, alors archevêque de Toulouse, manda chez lui Calas et *arrangea l'affaire*. Il va sans dire que ce fut en obligeant le père huguenot à céder au fils converti. Louis fut placé à Toulouse. Son père paya 400 livres pour son apprentissage et 600 pour des dettes contractées sans son consentement. Cette dernière libéralité prévint un ordre du ministre qui l'exigeait. Mais le jeune homme ne se tint pas pour content. Après le conseiller et l'archevêque, il lui restait le ministre à exploiter contre son père.

Malgré sa bonne volonté, dit-il dans ses tristes aveux, je ne

1. Le prétexte qu'il en donna lui fut sans doute suggéré; en tout cas, il est caractéristique. « Ne me croyant pas encore assez affermi dans la nouvelle foi que je venais d'embrasser, je craignis le danger, pour ma persévérance, d'aller dans une ville que personne n'ignore être malheureusement infectée, pour la plus grande partie, de l'erreur que je venais de quitter. » Je suis convaincu que cette phrase n'est pas de Louis, et ce style me semble trahir, même en ce moment où il défend sa famille, quelqu'un de ses conseillers ecclésiastiques.

cessai de lui faire de nouvelles demandes. J'eus même la témérité de lui écrire une lettre pleine de menaces, que s'il ne me faisait pas une pension suffisante et relative à mes besoins, je m'adresserais aux puissances pour l'y contraindre. L'effet le plus prompt suivit de près cette menace : je présentai un placet au ministre, au sujet de ma pension ; demande que mon père improuvait moins que la route que ma trop grande précaution m'avait fait prendre, et, nonobstant ma précipitation, il consentit à régler cette pension avec un négociant, ancien Capitoul de cette ville. Mon père n'insistait que sur la dureté des temps et la médiocrité de sa fortune. Il fut enfin conclu que la somme annuelle de 100 livres me serait adjugée pour mon entretien.

M. de Saint-Priest, en date du 12 novembre 1760, ordonna à M. Amblard, son subdélégué à Toulouse, de prendre des renseignements sur la situation de Calas. Il lui renvoyait le placet de Louis qui expose que « c'est en haine de sa conversion à la religion catholique que son père lui refuse » de l'argent. Amblard se trompe doublement en répondant, le 24 janvier 1761, que « le sieur Calas père est un homme fort riche<sup>1</sup> et fort dur à l'égard de son fils. Il accuse le père de n'avoir donné à Louis, depuis cinq ans, que 50 francs à diverses reprises. » sans dire combien de fois, ce qui est pourtant l'essentiel. Remarquons, d'après cette correspondance ; que dès ce moment M. Amblard, M. de Saint-Priest, le ministre Saint-Florentin, le Roi même étaient officiellement intervenus entre le fils et le père, et prétendaient décider ce que Calas pouvait donner et devait donner à Louis.

Nous verrons plus tard que le placet de ce fils avide et ingrat laissa des traces funestes dans l'esprit du tout-puissant ministre. Sans doute, ces diverses sommes paraîtraient fort insignifiantes aujourd'hui ; mais, à cette époque et surtout dans les provinces les plus éloignées de Paris, l'argent était rare. Nous verrons d'ail-

1. Voir plus bas (p. 267), une lettre du 28 avril 1762, où le même subdélégué, mieux informé, déclare, tout le contraire. Voir aussi p. 165.

leurs des preuves trop positives de la gêne où se trouvait Calas<sup>1</sup>, gêne qu'un négociant comme lui avait intérêt à ne pas divulguer inutilement. Il déclara (dans ses confrontations) que, depuis cette époque, il avait envoyé à Louis de l'argent à diverses reprises, en sus des sommes convenues, par l'intermédiaire de M. Delamote.

Ces arrangements amenèrent le père et le fils à se revoir. L'entrevue se passa chez un négociant, l'ancien Capitoul Borel, et en sa présence. Calas embrassa tendrement son fils et lui dit : « Pourvu que tu continues de te bien conduire et d'être sage, je ferai pour toi plus que tu ne penses<sup>2</sup>. »

Dès lors, toute relation directe cessa entre Louis et sa famille, à l'exception des réclamations qu'il trouvait moyen de faire parvenir, dès qu'un des quartiers de sa pension était en retard, non à son père seulement, mais à l'intendant de la province<sup>3</sup>. Il en avait parlé encore à Marc-Antoine, le 12 octobre, veille de sa mort.

Afin de rendre moins invraisemblable le meurtre du fils aîné, on a accusé les Calas de cruauté envers Louis ; il importe par conséquent de se rendre un compte exact de leur conduite envers ce fils devenu catholique ; nous citerons à ce sujet la déposition très-positive d'un chanoine, ami de la maison, l'abbé Azimond, que Louis avait envoyé à son père en décembre 1760, pour lui demander des fonds, afin d'établir un magasin en s'associant avec un sieur Bordes. Le père répondit qu'il n'avait pas assez d'argent comptant, mais qu'il consentirait à

1. M. Calas, d'après le témoin Alexandre Fabre, n'a pu payer 50 livres échues de la pension de son fils Louis, « malgré menace de lui envoyer la garnison. » Ce témoin ayant chargé Marc-Antoine de menacer son père d'une dragonnade s'il ne payait pas Louis, Marc-Antoine lui répondit « que Louis était fort heureux ; qu'il n'en était pas de même de lui : au contraire. » C'est-à-dire, que Louis, le déserteur du toit paternel, était le plus abondamment doté entre tous les fils, etc.

2. Décl., p. 5 ; Mém. just., p. 6.

3. Salvan, p. 13 (août 1761).

donner 3000 fr. en argent, 10 000 fr. en marchandises; que, du reste, il ne lui conseillait pas de s'établir encore, comme étant trop jeune. Il ajouta « qu'il désirait fort son avancement et qu'il ne l'aimait pas moins, quoiqu'il eût changé sa religion<sup>1</sup>. » Et comme Marc-Antoine, qui était présent, s'opposait à ce que son père fît un don aussi considérable à Louis, en lui rappelant avec emportement les torts de son frère et son abjuration, « le sieur Jean Calas, dit l'abbé Azimond, fut obligé de lui imposer silence. » Cette violente opposition n'empêcha pas le père de persévérer dans son offre en faveur de Louis. « Il m'en parla, ajoute le chanoine, avec tout l'amour qu'un père peut avoir pour ses enfants, et de toute sa famille qu'il aimait tendrement. Je n'ai connu en lui que des sentiments d'honneur et de probité. »

Loin d'être des fanatiques implacables et dénaturés, ses parents n'avaient donc pas cessé un seul instant de le chérir, et un prêtre impartial nous les montre encore prêts à venir en aide à leur fils, selon la mesure de leurs moyens, dans une entreprise qu'ils ne lui conseillent point, et malgré la colère et les efforts de son frère aîné.

Il est absolument faux qu'ils aient renié ou chassé Louis, pour le punir d'avoir abjuré; ce furent au contraire ses conseillers catholiques qui le tinrent soigneusement éloigné d'une maison où ils craignaient qu'on n'agit sur sa conscience et sur son cœur, pour le ramener à la foi protestante. Nous aurions pu supposer, et même conclure de divers indices, qu'il en fut ainsi; mais un autre prêtre qui devait le savoir mieux que personne, l'abbé de Contezat, le déclare formellement, dans sa violente brochure contre Paul Rabaut<sup>2</sup>; il est

1. Arch. imp.; voir aussi Mém. justif., *ibid.*

2. *Observations*, etc., p. 7; voir Bibliogr., n° 12.

certain que la séparation de Louis et de ses parents avait été ordonnée par ses protecteurs.

Il résulte de la déclaration du roi, citée plus haut, que c'était une règle établie, un usage généralement pratiqué, de ne jamais laisser retourner chez leurs parents un fils ou une fille qui avaient abjuré, de peur qu'ils ne fussent tentés de revenir au protestantisme.

Plus tard, dans tout le cours de cette malheureuse histoire, nous verrons Louis Calas agissant tantôt pour ses parents, dont il prit hautement le parti, tantôt aux dépens de sa famille et en faveur de l'Église à laquelle il s'était uni, mais, toujours et partout, cherchant à se procurer de l'argent par des moyens plus hardis que délicats.

Donat, le plus jeune des quatre frères et le dernier enfant de la famille, était apprenti dans une maison de commerce à Nîmes, lors du malheur qui frappa tous les siens. On lui donna le conseil de fuir à l'étranger, de peur d'être enveloppé dans des périls qu'il était trop jeune pour affronter utilement. Cette disparition parut suspecte et l'on ne manqua pas d'y chercher un nouveau crime. « A la démente de ces calomnies, écrivit plus tard le jeune Donat, on ajouta celle de dire que mon père m'avait assassiné. J'étais alors très-loin de ma famille et je fus obligé d'envoyer un certificat de vie<sup>1</sup>. » Agé alors de quinze ans et fort joli de figure, ce fut cet enfant que Voltaire fit venir pour l'interroger et dont les réponses naïves et les larmes gagnèrent à sa famille le protecteur puissant qui leur fit rendre justice.

Nous n'avons rien que d'honorable à dire des deux demoiselles Calas. Le 13 octobre, elles étaient à Sécha-bois; c'était la maison de campagne d'un négociant,

1. Lettre à l'archevêque de Toulouse, p. 23; voir Bibliographie, n° 20.

intime ami de leur famille, Teissier. L'accusation a voulu voir dans leur absence une preuve de la résolution prise par les parents d'assassiner leur fils aîné. Il serait naturel en effet que, voulant commettre un crime aussi épouvantable, ils eussent éloigné leurs filles, ne fût-ce que par prudence. Interrogée à ce sujet<sup>1</sup>, Mme Calas répondit simplement que ce séjour de ses filles au sein de la famille Teissier avait lieu tous les ans. Comme l'année précédente, leur frère Pierre<sup>2</sup> les avait conduites à Séchaboïs; comme l'année précédente aussi, leur père et leur mère devaient aller plus tard y passer quelque temps avec elles et les en ramener<sup>3</sup>.

Ces deux jeunes filles se ressemblaient, ou plutôt ressemblaient à leur mère, comme du reste tous ses enfants. Mais rien, sauf le cœur, n'était également réparti entre elles : beauté, grâce, esprit, la cadette avait tout en partage.

L'aînée des sœurs, nommée, comme sa mère, Anne-Rose, était une personne fort ordinaire en apparence, et dont tout le mérite consistait à se sacrifier à autrui sans jamais s'en plaindre ni s'en vanter. Elle mourut sans avoir été mariée<sup>4</sup>.

Dans un testament qui est sous nos yeux, Mme Calas, en lui donnant quelques avantages, les justifiait en ces termes : « C'est principalement parce que je crus reconnaître les soins qu'elle a eus pour moi et l'extrême ami-

1. Collection de M. Fournier.

2. Voir aussi Mém. justif. de Louis, p. 10.

3. M<sup>e</sup> Sudre demanda, dans son deuxième Mémoire, l'autorisation de prouver que Calas avait invité un bourgeois de ses amis à aller avec lui, sa femme et sa jeunesse, passer le dimanche chez Teissier. Ce fait justificatif ne fut pas plus examiné que les autres.

4. Ce serait à tort qu'on la confondrait avec *Anne Calas*, mariée à Nicolas-Joseph Mario, sculpteur, laquelle décéda rue du Temple et fut enterrée à Saint-Nicolas des Champs (*Annonces et affiches de Paris*; 17 août 1774).

Cette homonyme des trois dames Calas nous est inconnue.

tié dont elle m'a constamment donné des preuves en refusant les établissements qui se sont présentés parce qu'ils l'éloignaient de moi<sup>1</sup>. » La vie de Rose Calas fut consacrée tout entière à une œuvre de dévouement aussi infatigable que modeste ; elle fut l'appui toujours présent et toujours obscur de sa malheureuse mère. Assurément, il y a de plus beaux rôles devant le monde ; mais en est-il beaucoup de meilleurs devant Dieu ?

Il en est autrement d'Anne, la plus jeune, qu'on appelait familièrement Nanette<sup>2</sup>, et qui devint plus tard la femme du pasteur Duvoisin. Grimm décrit avec enthousiasme ses traits charmants, sa grâce touchante et naïve. Un juge beaucoup plus sévère rendit souvent l'hommage le plus chaleureux et le plus impartial à son caractère élevé, à sa conduite dirigée par le tact le plus délicat. La sœur Anne-Julie Fraisse, dont elle fut l'élève, en vertu d'une lettre de cachet, au couvent des Visitandines, devint son amie, tout en se désolant sans cesse de n'avoir pu réussir à la convertir. Nous publions plus loin la correspondance spirituelle et touchante de cette religieuse, déjà avancée en âge, avec la fille du martyr protestant, la femme du pasteur. Cette correspondance dura douze ans, et la mort seule l'interrompit. On y verra à quel point Nanette avait gagné le cœur des religieuses et surtout de sa directrice, personne aussi remarquable par sa vive intelligence que par sa pieuse charité, et qui devint un champion courageux et zélé des Calas, défendant, par sentiment de justice et de bonté, ces protestants dont elle déplorait la perdition éternelle, et travaillant ainsi à une même œuvre avec Voltaire, dont le nom lui était en abomination.

1. Arch. imp. — Interr. de la Dlle Calas.

2. Nous ferons de même, pour éviter toute confusion avec sa mère, sa sœur et la religieuse de la Visitation qui portaient toutes le prénom d'Anne.

C'est un honneur pour la cause des Calas que d'avoir ainsi enrôlé dans un même combat, en faveur d'une famille protestante persécutée, les encyclopédistes à Paris et les Visitandines à Toulouse. Nous verrons agir à la fois pour la veuve et les orphelins de Calas, Voltaire, du fond de son château de Ferney, la sœur Anne-Julie, de son monastère de la Visitation, et le pasteur proscrit Paul Rabaut, du Désert.





d'accepter une place qu'on lui avait procurée à Nîmes. Il se plaint que les Durand lui ont fait tout le mal qu'ils ont pu, directement et indirectement. La femme Durand a pleinement avoué qu'elle dirigeait Louis, puisqu'elle a déposé elle-même que, « lors de sa conversion, elle fut obligée de le faire changer trois fois de suite de maison, crainte qu'on ne l'enlevât. » L'abbé se plaint dans sa déposition qu'à ce moment les sieurs Calas cessèrent de se faire raser par son père. Il est facile de s'apercevoir que Jean Calas ne fut très-irrité que contre cette famille et non contre Louis. Marc-Antoine lui-même, plus sévère à l'égard de son frère, a dit un jour *qu'il le plaignait parce qu'il savait qu'on le lui avait fait faire*. Enfin, le soin que prirent les Durand de cacher Louis à ses parents prouve combien ils craignaient leur influence sur le nouveau converti <sup>1</sup>.

Il est impossible de nier que, sous cette impulsion étrangère, le jeune Louis n'ait mêlé aux tendances catholiques qu'il avait reçues de la vieille servante, des vues très-positives et très-intéressées. Sa conversion ne fut pas le premier ni le seul chagrin qu'il donna à ses parents. Il dit lui-même de son abjuration <sup>2</sup> : « Je la conduisis de concert avec d'autres projets sur mon établissement; mon père fut presque aussitôt instruit de l'un que de l'autre. » Et ailleurs (p. 7) : « C'est la dernière chose qu'il apprit, après tous les sujets de tracasserie que je lui donnai pour mes intérêts. » Voici comment il a raconté la découverte de son secret et la part qu'y prit Marc-Antoine :

1. L'abbé Durand mourut, au mois d'octobre 1763, d'une fièvre maligne qui l'emporta en sept jours. La sœur A.-J. Fräisse, en racontant à Mlle Calas, pour qu'elle en fît part à son frère Louis, la mort de cet ennemi de sa famille, ajouta ces mots bien certainement ironiques : *Il est mort en saint comme il avait vécu*. La religieuse se repentit aussitôt de cette ironie malséante et l'effaça. Mais il est très-facile de lire dans l'original les mots qu'elle a barrés.

2. Mém. justif., p. 4.

Pénétré des sentiments de ma nouvelle religion, mon zèle trop ardent me porta à méditer un projet dont mon père eut très lieu d'être fâché : j'osai adresser un placet, sans l'en avertir, à Mr l'Intendant, dans lequel je lui demandais sans sujet, de m'obtenir du Roi des ordres pour me séquestrer, ensemble avec mes sœurs et mon frère Jean-Louis-Donat. Je laissai imprudemment tomber de ma poche cet écrit téméraire. Marc-Antoine mon frère s'en saisit. C'était un jour que j'étais dans le magasin de mon père; j'essuyai de la part de mon malheureux frère, sur cette entreprise, des reproches amers, et surtout contre mon inexpérience et mon ingratitude envers un père qui ne me refusait rien pour mon avancement.

Honteux de ces reproches mérités, il n'osa pas affronter la douleur de sa mère et la juste indignation d'un père si vivement offensé. Il s'enfuit chez ses amis Durand, et se ménagea des intelligences avec Viguière, qui lui donnait des nouvelles de sa famille et même lui porta de l'argent<sup>1</sup>. Il se tint caché pendant quelque temps chez les dames Peyre et Larroque. De là il négociait avec son père. La conversion d'un protestant était encore à cette époque un mérite dont chacun se faisait gloire et qui pouvait devenir avantageux. Un conseiller au Parlement, M. Delamote, à qui l'on fit honneur de cette abjuration, se chargea d'aller l'annoncer à sa famille<sup>2</sup>. Jean Calas, éclairé par la découverte du placet, ne pouvait que s'y attendre et ne devait pas trop regretter la présence dangereuse d'un fils qui avait tenté de se venger de ses refus, en lui faisant enlever ses quatre enfants mineurs; de pareilles demandes avaient toujours grande chance d'être écoutées. Le père répondit froidement au conseiller Delamote, par ces paroles aussi simples que dignes : « J'ap-  
« prouve la conversion de mon fils, si elle est sincère.  
« Prétendre de gêner les consciences ne sert jamais  
« qu'à faire de parfaits hypocrites qui finissent par  
« n'avoir aucune religion<sup>3</sup>. »

1. Confrontation de Jeanne Viguière.

2. Voir, sur ce personnage, la note 9 à la fin du volume.

3. Déclaration de Louis Calas.

une éloquence peu commune. » Le même auteur ajoute que souvent ses amis l'avaient engagé à acheter une charge de conseiller au Parlement ; il avait préféré persévérer dans sa profession. Ajoutons, cependant, que cet homme de talent manqua complètement d'énergie dans le malheur et s'attira les vives réprimandes de Voltaire pour s'être laissé abattre par le coup qui atteignit son fils, et n'avoir osé d'abord le défendre qu'en secret. Il était protestant, ainsi que tous ses enfants, quoiqu'il eût été élevé par les jésuites, auxquels il ne craignit pas de confier ses fils. Ils étaient tous en règle avec l'autorité, ayant fait, pour la forme, tous les actes de catholicité qu'on avait exigés d'eux. M. et Mme Lavaysse habitaient en été le domaine du Pujolet, près de Caraman, où le chef de la famille était né en 1695. Ils avaient eu un grand nombre d'enfants, dont six leur restaient. Leur fille aînée, Mme Sénover, femme d'un avocat, était mère d'une nombreuse famille qui se trouvait également à Caraman. Après avoir travaillé deux ans chez un négociant de Toulouse, qui au bout de ce temps ferma sa maison, le jeune Gaubert avait désiré entrer dans la marine commerciale, et son père l'avait envoyé à Bordeaux pour y recevoir des leçons de *pilotage* et d'anglais, et pour passer quelque temps chez un armateur. Vers la fin de ces études spéciales, David Lavaysse apprit que son beau-frère, le sieur Faure, établi au cap Français (Saint-Domingue), venait d'être chargé par testament de gérer les affaires d'un des plus riches négociants de la colonie, nommé Magnon, et pouvait créer dans ce pays à son neveu une carrière lucrative et honorable. Il résolut d'envoyer Gaubert auprès de son oncle, dès qu'il aurait terminé son cours de pilotage. Tous ces détails sont prouvés, et l'on peut voir aux Archives Impériales les certificats originaux. 1° du père Lagorée, préfet du collège des Jésuites, où Gaubert avait étudié depuis l'âge de huit ans jusqu'à

seize<sup>1</sup>; 2° des chefs de la maison Duclos, de Toulouse, chez lesquels il avait été placé; 3° de six de leurs employés; 4° et 5° de ses professeurs d'anglais et d'hydrographie à Bordeaux; 6° de l'armateur Fesquet, chez lequel il avait travaillé seize mois; 7°, 8°, 9° de deux prêtres de Bordeaux, et du curé de la paroisse où il avait vécu. Dans cette longue série de témoignages qui le prend tout enfant et se termine à quelques jours de la date fatale, tout le présente comme fort doux de caractère, droit et honnête. Il était naturel qu'avant de l'envoyer à Saint-Domingue pour plusieurs années, ses parents voulussent le revoir. Ce fut le seul motif de son funeste voyage.

Son départ de Bordeaux avait été retardé, faute d'argent, pendant quelques jours. Il en avait passé trois à Montauban; on ne l'attendait point à jour fixe, ce qui d'ailleurs n'était guère possible, à la façon dont on voyageait alors. Il arriva à Toulouse dans la soirée du 12 octobre 1761, et trouva fermée la maison de ville de son père, rue Saint-Rémézy; on était à la campagne. Il se rendit alors chez Cazeing, auquel il portait des lettres et qui était aussi lié avec ses parents qu'avec les Calas. Cet ami de sa famille lui offrit un souper et une chambre. Le lendemain, une forte pluie l'empêcha de sortir jusqu'à midi. Dès qu'elle cessa, il se mit en quête d'un cheval de louage pour se rendre à Caraman et n'en trouva point, à cause des vendanges, qui à ce moment de l'année sont l'occupation générale de tout le pays<sup>2</sup>.

1. Lav. 1.

2. Nous ne perdrons pas le temps à discuter avec M. l'abbé Salvan les minutieuses chicanes qu'il élève contre ces déclarations fort naturelles de Lavaysse. Ce qu'il a de plus grave à lui opposer c'est « qu'on trouvait le 13 octobre des chevaux à louer à Toulouse, » puisque Louis Calas et son ami Teissier en louèrent un, pour ce dernier qui allait à Balma. Mieux vaudrait prouver qu'ils ne louèrent pas ce cheval, et le laissèrent disponible. Lavaysse ne dit point qu'il n'existait pas de chevaux à Tou-

Vers quatre heures, en passant devant la boutique des Calas, il y vit des femmes de Caraman. Il entra aussitôt dans cette maison dont il connaissait les maîtres, demanda à ces paysannes des nouvelles de sa famille, et conta son embarras. Pierre Calas s'offrit à l'aider dans ses recherches et le père l'invita à souper. Il accepta cette politesse que plus tard ce même Calas, sur la roue où il mourut, regretta amèrement de lui avoir faite, parce qu'elle l'enveloppa dans les malheurs de ses hôtes. Toutes les circonstances qui précèdent ont été démontrées au procès. Il reste à expliquer pourquoi une famille qui aurait formé l'horrible résolution de se défaire d'un de ses membres, inviterait un étranger à prendre une part dans ce meurtre qu'il n'aurait aucun motif de commettre.

Gaubert et Pierre Calas coururent la ville ensemble, cherchant un cheval sans en trouver; vers sept heures, ils accompagnèrent les étrangères venues de Caraman jusqu'à l'auberge d'où elles devaient partir pour retourner chez elles le même soir; Lavaysse alla ensuite prévenir Cazeing, son hôte, qu'il soupait chez les Calas, et revint partager ce repas, qui fut pour longtemps son dernier moment de liberté et de sécurité.

On est saisi d'horreur en songeant que ce doux et bon jeune homme devint, dans l'imagination atroce des accusateurs, un bourreau mandé de Bordeaux par les protestants de Toulouse, pour l'exécution de Marc-Antoine. « On le dit le *sacrificateur* de sa religion, c'est-à-dire honoré de l'emploi horrible d'étrangler ceux qui font mine de se convertir<sup>1</sup>. » Quelques-uns ajoutaient cette circonstance aggravante, qu'il devait être ministre

louse, mais qu'ils étaient loués; prouvez qu'il y en avait à l'écurie, ou vous ne prouvez rien. Teissier ne partit qu'à dix heures du matin, mais il avait loué sa monture de bonne heure; donc Lavaysse ne pouvait en disposer. (Jean Granier, témoin. *Salvan*, p. 34.)

1. Lettre de Couder. Voir Bibliogr., n° 22.

du saint Évangile, le tout fondé sur ces deux motifs qu'il était inconnu et qu'on le vit sortir le premier, en courant, de la maison des Calas, pour aller chercher le chirurgien Camoire. On le prit pour un assassin qui s'enfuit, et quand on le vit rentrer trois fois de suite<sup>1</sup>, quand enfin il força la consigne des soldats du guet pour pénétrer dans cette demeure d'où il ne devait sortir que prisonnier, on ne daigna pas remarquer que ce n'est pas ainsi qu'un meurtrier se cache ou s'échappe.

Que s'était-il donc passé dans l'intervalle? Quelle était la scène de mort qui s'était accomplie dans cette maison et dont le cadavre muet du fils aîné était l'unique mais irréfragable preuve? Il est temps de le dire; mais au lieu de le raconter, nous reproduirons le récit qu'en fit Mme Calas elle-même. C'est une lettre adressée soit au négociant Debrus, soit à l'avocat de Végo-bre, qui tous deux avaient connu les Calas à Toulouse, et reçu chez eux l'hospitalité. Il est impossible de douter de l'authenticité de cette lettre; Voltaire, dans le temps où il cherchait à s'assurer de la vérité sur cette affaire, demanda un récit des faits écrit par la mère de Marc-Antoine, par la veuve du supplicié. Quand cette lettre lui fut communiquée, il fut frappé de cette narration naïve, exempte de toute déclamation, et la publia aussitôt. Il crut avec raison que la parfaite sincérité de l'écrivain, cette douleur de mère maîtrisée et contenue avec effort, ne perdraient rien de leur éloquence à la familiarité des détails, à l'incorrection de quelques idiotismes de province<sup>2</sup>, à l'étrangeté de quelques phrases pensées en patois du Languedoc avant d'être écrites en français, comme il arrive en-

1. La première, après être allé chez Camoire, qui était sorti; la seconde, après avoir trouvé Cazeing; la troisième, en ramenant Monyer et Savanier.

2. *Fenassiers* pour loueurs de chevaux, *faire lumière*, avoir resté, etc.

core, dans le midi de la France, à certaines personnes.

« Voici exactement le détail de notre malheureuse affaire, tout comme elle s'est passée au vrai :

« Le 13 octobre 1761, jour infortuné pour nous, M. Gobert La Vaisse, arrivé de Bordeaux où il avait resté quelque temps, pour voir ses parents, qui étaient pour lors à leur campagne, et cherchant un cheval de louage pour les y aller joindre, sur les quatre à cinq heures du soir, vint à la maison ; et mon mari lui dit que puisqu'il ne partait pas, s'il voulait souper avec nous, il nous ferait plaisir ; à quoi le jeune homme consentit ; et il monta me voir dans ma chambre, d'où, contre mon ordinaire, je n'étais pas sortie. Le premier compliment fait, il me dit : « Je soupe avec vous, votre mari m'en a prié. » Je lui en témoignai ma satisfaction, et le quittai quelques moments pour aller donner des ordres à ma servante. En conséquence, je fus aussi trouver mon fils aîné que je trouvai assis tout seul dans la boutique, et fort rêveur, pour le prier d'aller acheter du fromage de Roquefort ; il était ordinairement le pourvoyeur pour cela, parce qu'il s'y connaissait mieux que les autres. Je lui dis donc : « Tiens, va acheter du fromage de Roquefort ; voilà de l'argent pour cela et tu rendras le reste à ton père <sup>1</sup> ; » et je retourne dans ma chambre joindre le jeune homme que j'y avais laissé. Mais peu d'instant après, il me quitta, disant qu'il voulait retourner chez les fenassiers voir s'il y avait quelque cheval d'arrivé, voulant absolument partir le lendemain pour la campagne de son père, et il sortit.

« Lorsque mon fils aîné eut fait l'emplette du fromage, l'heure du souper arrivée <sup>2</sup>, tout le monde se rendit pour se mettre à table, et nous nous y plaçâmes. Durant le souper qui ne fut pas fort long, on s'entretint de choses indifférentes, et entre autres des antiquités de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, et mon cadet (Pierre) voulut en citer quelques-unes, et son frère le reprit, parce qu'il ne le racontait pas bien, ni juste.

« Lorsque nous fûmes au dessert, ce malheureux enfant, je veux dire mon fils aîné, se leva de table, comme c'était sa coutume, et passa à la cuisine <sup>3</sup>. La servante lui dit : « Avez-vous froid, Monsieur l'aîné ? Chauffez-vous. » Il lui répondit : « Bien au contraire, je brûle ; » et sortit.

« Nous restâmes encore quelques moments à table, après quoi

1. On remarquera combien cette recommandation et ce rapide portrait de Marc-Antoine s'accordent avec tout ce que nous avons dit de lui.

2. Sur les sept heures.

3. La cuisine était auprès de la salle à manger, au premier étage.

nous passâmes dans cette chambre que vous connaissez, et où vous avez couché, M. La Vaisse, mon mari, mon fils et moi ; les deux premiers se mirent sur le sofa, mon cadet sur un fauteuil, et moi sur une chaise, et là nous fîmes la conversation tous ensemble. Mon fils cadet s'endormit, et environ sur les neuf heures trois quarts à dix heures M. La Vaisse prit congé de nous, et nous réveillâmes mon cadet pour aller accompagner ledit La Vaisse, lui remettant le flambeau à la main pour aller lui faire lumière, et ils descendirent ensemble.

« Mais lorsqu'ils furent en bas, l'instant d'après, nous entendîmes des cris d'alarme, sans distinguer ce que l'on disait, auxquels mon mari accourut, et moi je demeurai tremblante sur la galerie, n'osant descendre et ne sachant ce que ce pouvait être.

« Cependant, ne voyant personne venir, je me déterminai de descendre, ce que je fis ; mais je trouvai au bas de l'escalier M. La Vaisse, à qui je demandai avec précipitation qu'est-ce qu'il y avait ? Il me répondit qu'il me suppliait de remonter, que je le saurais ; et il me fit tant d'instances que je remontai avec lui dans ma chambre. Sans doute que c'était pour m'épargner la douleur de voir mon fils dans cet état ; et il redescendit. Mais l'incertitude où j'étais était un état trop violent pour pouvoir y rester longtemps ; j'appelle donc ma servante, et lui dis : « Jeanette, allez voir ce qu'il y a là-bas ; je ne sais pas ce que c'est, je suis toute tremblante ; » et je lui mis la chandelle à la main, et elle descendit ; mais ne la voyant point remonter pour me rendre compte, je descendis moi-même. Mais, grand Dieu ! quelle fut ma douleur et ma surprise, lorsque je vis ce cher fils étendu à terre ! Cependant je ne le crus pas mort, et je courus chercher de l'eau de la Reine d'Hongrie, croyant qu'il se trouvait mal ; et comme l'espérance est ce qui vous quitte le dernier, je lui donnai tous les secours qu'il m'était possible pour le rappeler à la vie, ne pouvant me persuader qu'il fût mort.

« Nous nous en flattions tous, puisque l'on avait été chercher le chirurgien, et qu'il était auprès de moi, sans que je l'eusse vu ni aperçu, que lorsqu'il me dit qu'il était inutile de lui rien faire de plus, qu'il était mort. Je lui soutins alors que cela ne se pouvait pas, et je le priai de redoubler ses attentions, et de l'examiner plus exactement, ce qu'il fit inutilement ; cela n'était que trop vrai. Et pendant tout ce temps-là mon mari était appuyé sur un comptoir à se désespérer ; de sorte que mon cœur était déchiré entre le déplorable spectacle de mon fils mort, et la crainte de perdre ce cher mari, de sa douleur à laquelle il se livrait tout entier sans entendre aucune consolation ; et ce fut dans cet état que la justice nous trouva, lorsqu'elle nous arrêta dans notre chambre où on nous avait fait remonter.



« Voilà l'affaire tout comme elle s'est passée mot à mot ; et je prie Dieu, qui connaît notre innocence, de me punir éternellement, si j'ai augmenté ni diminué d'un iota, et si je n'ai dit la pure vérité en toutes ces circonstances ; je suis prête à sceller de mon sang cette vérité <sup>1</sup>. »

*Votre très humble et très  
obeissante servante  
anne Roje Calas Palas*

Comment ne pas être ému de ce langage aussi ferme que touchant ? Comment ne pas y reconnaître une mère en qui la douleur, que son récit renouvelle, est dominée par le désir de réhabiliter le mari qu'elle pleure et de sauver du déshonneur les tristes restes de sa famille ? N'est-ce pas un trait de vérité frappant que ce mot, à propos du chirurgien : « Il était auprès de moi, sans que je l'eusse vu ni aperçu, que lorsqu'il me dit qu'il était inutile de lui rien faire de plus ; qu'il était mort. » Et après ce mot fatal, quelle vérité dans cette naïve réponse : « Je lui soutins alors que cela ne se pouvait pas ! » Dans un autre endroit, c'est bien une mère de famille qui se peint elle-même, le cœur déchiré entre son fils mort et l'inquiétude que lui causait le désespoir de son mari ; le père ne voyait plus que le fils qu'il venait de perdre ; elle songeait à tous deux, même dans l'horreur du premier moment ; elle le dit, sans s'apercevoir qu'elle prouve sa force d'âme.

Aussi sommes-nous entièrement, sur cette lettre, de

1. Nous empruntons cette signature à la lettre de Mme Calas à La Beaumelle que nous donnons plus loin (Pièces just. XXXIV, à la fin du volume). L'original nous a été communiqué par feu M. Maurice Angliviel.

l'opinion qu'exprimait Voltaire avec tant de chaleur lorsqu'il écrivait au marquis d'Argence de Dirac (à propos de Fréron qui avait réfuté ses arguments en faveur des Calas) :

« Si cet homme avait lu la lettre que Mme Calas écrivit, de la retraite où elle était mourante et dont on la tira avec tant de peine ; s'il avait vu la candeur, la douleur, la résignation qu'elle mettait dans le récit du meurtre de son fils et de son mari, et cette vérité irrésistible avec laquelle elle prenait Dieu à témoin de son innocence..., etc. <sup>1</sup> »

A ce récit, où l'énergie du caractère de Mme Calas se laisse entrevoir à travers ses larmes et les contient, ajoutons quelques faits que nous fournissent les interrogatoires et nos documents.

Quand Lavaysse était rentré pour le souper, avec Pierre Calas, qui l'avait aidé dans ses recherches, ce dernier avait tiré après lui la porte de la maison et elle s'était fermée par son propre poids. Cette circonstance, où l'on a vu la préméditation d'un crime, était fort simple ; il était d'usage chez les Calas, comme en général chez les marchands de la ville, de fermer la maison pendant les repas.

Les deux jeunes gens montèrent dans la chambre de Mme Calas ; elle y était avec son mari et son fils aîné, que Lavaysse décrit, enfoncé dans son fauteuil, la tête appuyée sur une main, et ne faisant aucune attention à eux. A table, Marc-Antoine mangea peu, but plusieurs verres de vin, et au dessert se leva et sortit, suivant son habitude.

Deux heures environ s'écoulèrent ; Mme Calas, qui avait pris un ouvrage de broderie, travaillait en causant avec son mari et avec Lavaysse. Quand ce dernier voulut se retirer, il se trouva que Pierre s'était endormi ; on fut obligé de le réveiller, mais il en eut honte et ne

1. Voir Bibliographie, n° 45.

voulut pas en convenir; tous le plaisantèrent; on rit aux éclats et l'on se sépara gaiement; dernier éclair de joie! Déjà la mort était dans la maison. On allait le savoir.

Il était entre neuf heures et demie et dix heures. Lavaysse descendit, accompagné de Pierre, et fit le premier une remarque très-naturelle qui amena la découverte du cadavre : la porte qui faisait communiquer le corridor avec la boutique était ouverte. Était-ce une négligence de la servante, ou quelqu'un s'était-il introduit dans le magasin? Pierre y entra pour s'en assurer. Son ami le suivit, et tous deux, saisis d'horreur, poussèrent des cris d'effroi, en trouvant Marc-Antoine pendu à la porte intérieure qui faisait communiquer la boutique avec une arrière-boutique qu'on appelait le magasin. Sur les deux battants de cette porte ouverte, Marc-Antoine avait posé en travers un de ces *billots* ou *billes*, gros bâtons ronds, aplatis à un bout, avec lesquels on serrait les ballots d'étoffes. C'est à ce billot qu'il s'était pendu avec une corde à double nœud coulant. Il était en manches de chemise. On remarqua plus tard que ses cheveux n'étaient point en désordre, ni ses vêtements froissés. Les agents de la justice trouvèrent son habit de drap gris et sa veste de nankin posés sur le comptoir et pliés avec soin, étrange détail qui prouve bien, non-seulement une mort volontaire, mais cette froide et lente détermination avec laquelle on exécute un suicide auquel on a longtemps songé. Pierre prit la main de son frère; ce mouvement fit balancer le cadavre; aussitôt les deux jeunes gens épouvantés coururent appeler au secours.

A ces cris, le malheureux père descendit précipitamment en robe de chambre; ni l'un ni l'autre des deux amis n'avait eu le temps ou la présence d'esprit de couper la corde. Calas court au cadavre et le saisit dans ses bras; le corps étant soulevé ainsi, le billot roula à

terre. Aussitôt le père coucha son fils sur le plancher, et ôta la corde en élargissant le nœud coulant; en même temps il criait à Pierre : « Au nom de Dieu, cours chez Camoire (un chirurgien voisin); peut-être mon pauvre fils n'est pas tout à fait mort. »

A cet ordre Pierre et Lavaysse sortirent en courant. Le premier revint presque immédiatement avec Gorsse, élève du chirurgien Camoire. Il trouva sa mère penchée sur Marc-Antoine, lui frottant les tempes et s'efforçant en vain de lui faire avaler un spiritueux. La bouche se refermait d'elle-même comme par un ressort. Gorsse s'aperçut immédiatement qu'il était trop tard; il ôta la cravate, vit la marque de la corde autour du cou, et déclara que Marc-Antoine était mort étranglé ou pendu.

Pierre en ce moment perdit la tête. Il sortit éperdu pour *aller*, dit-il plus tard, *demander conseil partout*<sup>1</sup>. Il ne savait ce qu'il faisait, et son père le rappela en lui disant : « Ne va pas répandre le bruit que ton frère s'est défait lui-même; sauve au moins l'honneur de ta misérable famille. »

Ce conseil de dissimulation eut des suites funestes, mais il n'était pas sans excuse; la législation du temps sur le suicide était barbare et hideuse. Elle avait pour point de départ la loi romaine : *Homicida sui insepultus abjiciatur*, loi qui emportait la confiscation de tous les biens au profit de l'empereur. Le temps avait ajouté aux rigueurs de cette ordonnance; on faisait le procès au cadavre comme on l'aurait fait à un vivant. En cas de condamnation, le corps, absolument nu, était traîné à travers les rues sur une claie, le visage contre terre, aux huées de la populace, qui souvent le souillait de boue ou le meurtrissait à coups de pierres. Puis, ce

1. « Il alla aux *Quatre-Billards* (cet établissement était dans la petite rue qui porte encore ce nom) demander en pleurant au billardier si Marc-Antoine avait eu querelle avec quelqu'un. » (Arch. Imp.)

corps était suspendu au gibet, et les biens du mort, s'il en laissait, confisqués au profit du roi.

Cette épouvantable idée devait faire frémir un père ; d'ailleurs l'infamie publique de cette exécution déshonorait toute une famille ; elle aurait couvert d'ignominie l'avenir des frères et des sœurs du suicidé. Jean Calas voulut épargner ces horreurs à tous ses enfants, et ces hideux outrages à la dépouille de son malheureux fils. Il ne pouvait prévoir que ce mauvais conseil, donné par lui à Pierre, était son propre arrêt de mort et devait exposer tous les siens au dernier supplice. Terrible exemple du mal que peut faire le mensonge, même le plus innocent ! Il n'est personne peut-être qui n'eût commis, en toute sûreté de conscience, une faute si naturelle. On ne se persuade pas assez que dire la vérité c'est tout remettre à Dieu, tandis que mentir par précaution c'est s'ériger soi-même en Providence ; Providence d'autant plus impuissante qu'elle s'appuie sur ce qui n'est pas. Un seul mot de mensonge, plus excusable que tout autre, dicté par les intentions les plus excellentes et les plus cruelles circonstances, a suffi pour précipiter toute cette famille et Lavaysse dans un abîme de maux.

Pierre promet d'obéir, courut chez Cazeing, y retrouva Lavaysse et lui demanda instamment de nier le suicide de son frère ; ce jeune homme eut le malheur d'y consentir. « Je croyais alors, a-t-il dit, pouvoir et devoir le promettre. » Aussi déclarèrent-ils tous qu'ils avaient trouvé Marc-Antoine sans vie, sur le plancher du magasin, comme le virent les Capitouls et les témoins. C'était la vérité, quant aux deux femmes. C'était faux, quant au père, quant à son fils Pierre et à Lavaysse, qui tous trois l'avaient vu pendu.

Cette dissimulation est d'autant plus coupable, qu'interrogés suivant l'usage sous la foi du serment, dès leur arrivée à l'hôtel de ville, ils persistèrent dans leur

assertion qui devenait ainsi un parjure. Jamais, au reste, imposture ne fut plus maladroite : elle n'expliquait rien, et il fut facile aux Capitouls de s'assurer non-seulement que Marc-Antoine était mort étranglé ou pendu, mais que ses parents devaient en savoir plus qu'ils n'en disaient.

« D'un autre côté ce mensonge, comme le remarque l'avocat de Calas <sup>1</sup>, était sans gravité devant la loi, sinon aux yeux de la morale religieuse. Il ne se produisit que dans un interrogatoire qui est nul de plein droit : 1° parce qu'il ne fut requis par personne; 2° parce qu'il n'y avait encore ni accusés ni procès. N'étant ni prévenus ni accusés et ne prévoyant pas qu'ils dussent l'être, ils durent tourner, s'il était possible, toutes leurs pensées à sauver l'honneur du défunt <sup>2</sup>. »

Voltaire essaye avec plus de chaleur encore de justifier la dissimulation des Calas; il rappelle la déclaration de Pierre (p. 13) :

« Mon père, dans l'excès de sa douleur, me dit : « Ne va pas répandre le bruit que ton frère s'est défait lui-même; sauve au moins l'honneur de ta misérable famille. » Il est essentiel, ajoute Voltaire, de rapporter ces paroles; il l'est de faire voir que le mensonge en ce cas est une piété paternelle; que nul homme n'est obligé de s'accuser soi-même, ni d'accuser son fils; que l'on n'est point censé faire un faux serment quand, après avoir prêté serment en justice, on n'avoue pas d'abord ce qu'on avoue ensuite; que jamais on n'a fait un crime à un accusé de ne pas faire au premier moment les aveux nécessaires; qu'enfin les Calas n'ont fait que ce qu'ils ont dû faire. Ils ont commencé par vouloir défendre la mémoire du mort et ils ont fini par se défendre eux-mêmes. Il n'y a dans ce procédé rien que de naturel et d'équitable <sup>3</sup>. »

Dès qu'ils se virent accusés, tous dirent la vérité, et l'on aurait dû comprendre que cette fois ils étaient sincères, parce qu'ils répondaient de même, quoiqu'ils fussent enfermés séparément, sans aucune communication entre eux. Leur première assertion avait pu être concertée, puisqu'alors ils étaient libres; leur aveu ne

1. Sudre, 1 et 2. — 2. Sudre, 2. — 3. A Damilaville, octobre.

pouvait être que vrai, puisqu'il était identique<sup>1</sup> de la part des trois hommes, sans possibilité de s'entendre ou de connaître même les réponses de leurs coaccusés. Malgré cette preuve sans réplique, on ne voulut voir dans leur déclaration qu'un deuxième système de défense, aussi faux que le premier, ou plutôt un pas vers l'aveu du crime. Ils reconnaissaient maintenant que Marc-Antoine était mort pendu; on espéra qu'ils finiraient par convenir qu'ils l'avaient pendu eux-mêmes.

Nous savons par Lavaysse<sup>2</sup> qu'à l'hôtel de ville, après les interrogatoires, le greffier Savanier dit devant lui à David : « Il est aussi vrai que c'est son frère qui l'a tué, comme il l'est que je tiens une plume à la main. » David répondit : « Je vois qu'il leur en coûtera quelques tours de question qui, à coup sûr, feront ruisseler le sang. » C'était là une menace destinée à effrayer les accusés pour obtenir un aveu. Il est évident que s'ils avaient persisté dans leur dissimulation première, ils se perdaient.

C'est ici que se place un incident dont on a abusé récemment contre les Calas et sur lequel il importe de ne laisser planer aucune incertitude. On prétend qu'ils étaient coupables, que le suicide de Marc-Antoine fut

1. Ils différèrent en un seul point. On demanda à Calas par qui la corde avait été coupée. Il répondit qu'il ne le savait pas; il croyait que Pierre ou Lavaysse l'avaient coupée au moment où il soulevait le cadavre. Il le pensait d'autant plus qu'on lui parlait de cette corde comme si c'eût été un fait acquis qu'elle avait été coupée. Pierre affirmait au contraire que le billot, posé en travers sur les battants de la porte, était tombé dès que son père avait soulevé le cadavre, et que la corde devait se retrouver entière. On la chercha en effet, et on la trouva par terre, avec le billot; elle portait encore quelques cheveux du mort; elle n'était pas coupée. Lorsque Calas fut confronté avec son fils, il répéta la même réponse: mais Pierre rectifia aussitôt le fait. Calas alors expliqua que, n'éprouvant aucune résistance, il avait cru la corde coupée par Pierre ou par Lavaysse. N'est-il pas facile de comprendre que ce détail minutieux, où deux accusés se contredisent, et qui se rapporte à l'instant où le malheureux père fit à son tour l'horrible découverte du suicide, a pu être mieux observé par son fils, moins bouleversé que lui-même?

2. Lav., 3.

une invention trouvée après coup par des amis inconnus et qu'elle fut communiquée aux prisonniers par des lettres mystérieuses. Pour comprendre toute cette affaire il faut connaître les différences énormes qui existaient entre la procédure d'alors et celle qui depuis la Révolution est pratiquée chez nous. Les Calas ne virent jamais leur avocat, et n'eurent avec lui aucun genre de communication; ils ne connurent pas même ce qu'il écrivit pour leur défense. Il n'y avait alors ni plaidoirie, ni jugement public. L'inquisition ou information secrète consistait uniquement en *interrogatoires*, en *récolements* ou lecture du procès-verbal de chaque interrogatoire donnée au répondant qui était ensuite obligé de signer ce procès-verbal, et en *confrontations* de chaque accusé avec chaque témoin.

Lavaysse rapporte<sup>1</sup> que le 14, à dix heures du matin (c'est-à-dire après l'ordonnance d'écrou que rendit le chef du Consistoire), on le fit sortir de chez l'enseigne du guet et on le mit dans un cachot sans lumière où il ne trouva pour s'asseoir que de la paille, et qui était déjà occupé par un autre prisonnier. De là, pendant une partie de chaque journée, on le faisait passer dans une grande chambre, dite *la Miséricorde*, où l'on rassemblait les détenus pour affaires criminelles. Le premier jour, il y reçut plusieurs visites d'amis de sa famille, entre autres, celle de Louis Calas, qui accourut pour savoir de lui ce qui s'était passé<sup>2</sup>, et qui n'osa demander à voir ses parents. Peut-être, ce jour-là, l'aurait-il obtenu; plus tard, on n'y consentit pas; il ne revit jamais son père. Un autre visiteur de Gaubert fut M<sup>e</sup> Carrière, avocat bien connu de la famille Lavaysse<sup>3</sup>. Le jeune homme lui raconta comment les choses s'étaient passées. Seulement Lavaysse n'avait pas distingué, à la lueur de la chandelle que tenait Pierre, à quoi Marc-

1. Lav., 3. — 2. Mém. justif., p. 9. — 3. Voir la note 11.



Antoine s'était pendu, et il avait cru que c'était au cintre de la porte; ce fut ce qu'il dit à l'avocat. Celui-ci alla voir les lieux, ne trouva ni clou ni crochet au-dessus de la porte et revint dire à Lavaysse : « Vous m'avez trompé; je viens de chez M. Calas; j'ai visité la porte, j'ai tout examiné et je n'ai rien trouvé à quoi son fils puisse s'être pendu. — Cela est pourtant certain, répondit le jeune homme, j'en suis sûr, je l'ai vu; il est vrai que je ne sais à quoi la corde était attachée, mais ne doutez pas de ce que je vous ai dit. » M<sup>e</sup> Carrière alla voir alors séparément Calas et son fils, qui tous deux lui apprirent comment avait eu lieu le suicide, sans crochet ni clou. Il les exhorta à dire toute la vérité, sans prétendre épargner l'honneur du défunt. Dès ce même jour, ils furent tous mis au secret<sup>1</sup>.

Si nous rapprochons de ce récit de Lavaysse et de Carrière les dires des témoins, tout s'accorde et s'explique. Le premier, fort hostile du reste, est l'abbé Benaben, l'ami du prêtre Durand et de Louis Calas. Il dit que le 14, il accompagna Louis Calas chez M<sup>e</sup> Carrière, et l'on ne peut voir sans quelque inquiétude cet étranger malveillant initié ainsi à tout ce que tentaient Louis et l'avocat pour la défense de la famille.

Selon Benaben, pendant qu'ils étaient ensemble, un soldat entra, portant une lettre du sieur Calas, dans laquelle il demandait ce qu'il devait répondre. M<sup>e</sup> Carrière s'écria qu'il fallait qu'il eût perdu l'esprit : « Je lui ai dit hier qu'il devait déclarer la vérité et ne pas ménager l'honneur du défunt. » M<sup>e</sup> Carrière dicta alors trois lettres<sup>2</sup>.

1. Voir plus bas une lettre du président de Senaux à M. de Saint-Florentin. (Pièces just. v.)

2. On nous excusera d'entrer ici dans de minutieux détails. Ces lettres sont devenues un prétexte à des accusations très-graves et mal fondées. Nous reproduisons, dans la note 11, celle qui fut adressée à Lavaysse. On ne s'étonnera pas de ce que Carrière, au milieu de la terreur produite

Il est impossible que cette déposition soit tout à fait exacte. Ce n'est pas le 14 que ceci eut lieu ; car on a encore ces lettres et elles sont datées du 15 octobre au soir. Celle adressée à Pierre finit par ces mots : « Il est inutile que je signe cette lettre, parce que vous vous rappellerez que je vous parlai hier soir à votre souper. » En effet si c'eût été le 14 que ces lettres eussent été écrites, Carrière n'aurait pu ni s'exprimer ainsi, ni s'écrier : « Je le lui ai dit hier ; » car les accusés n'arrivèrent à l'hôtel de ville qu'après minuit, subirent immédiatement les interrogatoires d'office, et n'ont pu voir Carrière que dans la soirée du 14 ou au plus tôt dans l'après-midi. Il est permis aussi de douter de l'impartialité avec laquelle l'abbé rend compte de la lettre de Calas qu'il ne dit pas même avoir lue, et qui, apportée par un soldat, sans aucun mystère, avait certainement passé sous les yeux des autorités ou de leurs agents.

Voici qui est beaucoup plus précis : le témoin Delibes, greffier de la geôle, dépose que deux ou trois jours après l'arrestation <sup>1</sup>, Louis Calas vint tout en larmes le trouver, demandant à voir son père dans la prison pour se réconcilier avec lui, ce qui ne put lui être accordé. Alors il lui remit les trois lettres de M<sup>r</sup> Carrière. Le greffier n'hésita pas à donner à Calas celle qui lui était adressée, probablement parce qu'il avait été autorisé à laisser sortir celle de Calas dont la réponse arrivait en ce moment. Ce dernier, quand il apprit que Louis avait apporté cette lettre en exprimant le désir de se réconcilier avec lui, « répondit au déposant, en versant des larmes, qu'il était très-sensible aux soins que se donnait son fils Louis. » Le greffier se retira ; mais

par l'arrestation et les rumeurs qui se répandaient, n'osa signer ses trois lettres.

1. D'après ce qui précède, ce dut être, en effet, le troisième jour, ou en d'autres termes, deux jours après l'arrestation, c'est à-dire le 15.

au moment de remettre à Pierre Calas et à Lavaysse les deux lettres qui leur étaient adressées, il hésita, craignit de se compromettre et les garda.

Le même soir, Louis revint lui demander s'il avait remis les trois missives. Delibes lui avoua sa crainte. Louis répondit en l'autorisant à les décacheter et à les lire. Il le fit, mais n'en persista pas moins à garder les lettres. Plus tard, apprenant que le *monitoire* allait être *fulminé*, il *craignit pour sa conscience* et alla déposer ces deux pièces chez le procureur général, qui les fit joindre au procès. Elles y sont encore ; nous les avons lues, et tout s'y accorde parfaitement avec ce que viennent de nous apprendre le mémoire de l'un des accusés et les témoignages d'un prêtre et d'un geôlier. Elles ne sont pas signées ; il est évident que Carrière, comme Delibes, craignit de se compromettre dans cette terrible affaire ; il se contenta d'en appeler à ce qu'il avait conseillé la veille aux accusés dans leur prison et les engagea très-vivement à tout dire.

C'est pour n'avoir pas lu ces lettres et n'avoir pas connu toutes les circonstances que nous venons de rapprocher, qu'on a cru trouver dans ce fait un argument très-puissant contre les Calas. Tantôt c'est dom Vayssette ou plutôt du Mége <sup>1</sup>, son continuateur, qui publie que le témoin Barnabou (il veut dire l'abbé Benaben) a déposé qu'on avait écrit à Calas pour lui dicter ses réponses ; tantôt c'est un autre écrivain, M. Huc <sup>2</sup>, qui n'a lu évidemment ni ces lettres, ni le troisième mémoire de Lavaysse, ni le premier mémoire de Sudre, ni les dépositions que nous avons citées, et qui suppose que M<sup>e</sup> Monyer pourrait bien être l'auteur des lettres. Il rêve que les protestants de Toulouse s'entendaient avec Monyer, assesseur des Capitouls, pour diriger les réponses des accusés ; il imagine gratuitement d'autres lettres,

1. Hist. du Languedoc, voir *Bibliographie*, n° 80.

2. *Procès*, etc., voir *Bibliographie*, n° 81.

des visites mystérieuses dans la prison, et il en conclut que le suicide de Marc-Antoine fut un système de défense inventé après coup par d'autres que les Calas, et qu'on leur conseilla de soutenir.

Il y a une difficulté ou plutôt une impossibilité absolue à admettre ceci. Nous savons par la lettre du président de Senaux au ministre que les prisonniers ne reçurent plus ni lettres ni visites<sup>1</sup>, et l'on vient de lire les déclarations du greffier de la geôle. Cependant Pierre et Lavaysse, qui n'ont jamais reçu les lettres que leur avait adressées Carrière, dirent exactement les mêmes choses que Calas, à qui la sienne était parvenue. Ceci ne prouve-t-il pas qu'ils prirent tous le parti de dire la vérité tout entière? Ces lettres, en effet, ne leur conseillaient pas autre chose.

Ce n'est pas tout. Calas lui-même n'a pu recevoir avant le 15 la lettre de l'avocat écrite ce même jour; or c'est le 14, dans l'interrogatoire, sur l'écrou, son premier interrogatoire légal, c'est en se voyant accusé, qu'il déclara le suicide de son fils. Carrière avait donc été obéi d'avance.

Bien loin de rien prouver contre l'innocence des Calas, cet épisode dont on a fait grand bruit de nos jours, prouve jusqu'à l'évidence<sup>2</sup> que le seul motif de leur dissimulation antérieure avait été le désir bien naturel d'éviter que le procès fût fait au cadavre.

1. Voir Pièces just. v. On les sépara, on fit garder chacun d'eux par un soldat du guet, et l'on défendit toute communication, tant entre eux qu'avec qui que ce fût. Le 7 mars, M. de Saint-Priest, écrivant à Amblard, approuve « l'exemple qu'ont fait les Capitouls sur le soldat du guet qui contre les défenses qu'on lui avait faites, de laisser parler entre eux les prisonniers, leur a laissé cette liberté. » Nous ne savons ni quel fut le châtiment du coupable, ni quelle liberté, fort restreinte évidemment, il avait laissé prendre aux captifs.

2. Sudre, 2.



## CHAPITRE V.

### INTERVENTION ECCLÉSIASTIQUE.

**Le Monitoire. — Funérailles de Marc-Antoine.**

**Les pénitents blancs.**

Il y a différents ordres de lois; et la sublimité de la raison humaine consiste à savoir bien auquel de ces ordres se rapportent principalement les choses sur lesquelles on doit statuer, et à ne point mettre de confusion dans les principes qui doivent gouverner les hommes.

MONTESQUIEU.

(*Esprit des Lois*, I, 26, c. 1.)

Déjà trente témoins avaient été interrogés et l'on ne trouvait aucune preuve qui permit de condamner les Calas.

La justice du temps employait, pour se procurer des informations, un moyen qui paraîtrait aujourd'hui fort étrange, mais dont l'effet, en bien ou en mal, serait encore très-considérable dans certaines localités et l'était bien plus alors. Le procureur du roi dressait une liste des faits, certains ou présumés, qu'il avait besoin de voir attester par des témoins, et s'adressait à l'autorité ecclésiastique afin qu'un avertissement ou *monitoire* fût lu au prône et affiché dans les rues, pour prévenir tous ceux qui *sauraient par oui-dire ou autrement* les faits en question, que s'ils ne venaient les déclarer soit à la justice,

soit à leurs curés, ils encourraient la peine de l'excommunication<sup>1</sup>. Si la publication de cet avertissement ne produisait pas l'effet qu'on en attendait, le même monitoire était *fulminé*, c'est-à-dire que dans les églises, avec un cérémonial effrayant, on prononçait l'excommunication contre tous ceux qui s'abstenaient de déposer. Dès ce moment, ils étaient damnés s'ils venaient à mourir sans s'être réconciliés avec l'Église et surtout s'ils s'approchaient des sacrements. Dans une ville aussi catholique que l'était Toulouse, on se figure à peine l'impression produite par ces actes étranges, où les terreurs de l'enfer devenaient des moyens de procédure<sup>2</sup>.

Des règles sévères étaient prescrites au rédacteur de ce formidable document. Avant tout, il devait être conçu à décharge aussi bien qu'à charge, c'est-à-dire qu'on devait menacer également ceux qui n'auraient pas le courage de déposer pour les accusés et ceux qui négligeraient de témoigner contre eux. Cette impartialité du monitoire était d'autant plus indispensable que les prévenus à cette époque ne pouvaient faire citer aucun témoin et qu'en outre on pratiquait rigoureusement la règle d'après laquelle aucun témoin n'était admissible, s'il se présentait de son propre mouvement<sup>3</sup>, ou s'il parlait de faits qui n'étaient point mis en question. C'étaient ce qu'on appelait des faits *extra articulos*, en de-

1. Voir sur les monitoires : Ordonnance de 1670, titre 7. — Édit d'avril 1675, art. 26, 28, etc. — *Traité du Monitoire* de Bouault. — *Traité des Crimes*, de Soulage, II, 122. — Faustin Hélie, *Histoire et Théorie de la Procédure criminelle*, p. 622.

2. Voici une déclaration, entre bien d'autres, qui montre que les menaces d'un Monitoire n'étaient pas sans effet (Arch. Imp.) :

A Toulouse, ce 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1761.

On prétend que je suis dans le cas de l'excommunication par le chef du monitoire parce que j'avois ouy dire par une personne que M. Laplaigne avait instruit, avec le Père Latour, le petit Calas, mort. Si je suis dans le cas, je rendray mon audition quand j'en serai requis.

DARLES, maitre en chirurgie, signé.

3. Testis se offerens repellitur a testimonio.

hors des articles. Il était admis en principe qu'un témoin ne prouve que pour les questions pour lesquelles il a été reçu à serment ; en effet, le serment ne s'appliquait alors qu'à une série de questions posées à l'avance et l'on disait d'un témoin qui sortait de ces limites : *Non juratus eo casu deponit*, il dépose en ce cas sans avoir juré.

Si donc le monitoire n'était pas conçu à décharge comme à charge, ceux qui avaient du bien à dire des accusés étaient contraints de se taire ; ils n'avaient aucun droit, aucun moyen de faire entendre ce qu'on ne leur demandait pas, ce qu'on ne cherchait pas à savoir. Il suffisait ainsi de la rédaction partielle d'un monitoire pour annuler ou rendre impossible d'avance et d'un seul coup toute déposition favorable. C'est précisément ce qui est arrivé dans l'affaire qui nous occupe. Lavaysse père écrit<sup>1</sup> que le procureur du roi et les Capitouls dédaignèrent de faire assigner plusieurs témoins qui s'étaient présentés à leur curé pour révéler des faits à décharge. Il ne faut pas s'en étonner. Ces témoins avaient tort ; le monitoire ne les avait nullement autorisés. Lorsque le procès fut révisé, c'est-à-dire après le supplice de Calas, un témoin nouveau que nous avons cité déjà, le chanoine Azimond, termina en ces termes sa déposition, très-importante pour les accusés :

« Au surplus, je déclare que j'aurois déposé le contenu de la  
« présente déclaration dans le cours de l'instruction criminelle  
« intentée contre le sieur Jean Calas, si j'en eusse été requis ou  
« si le Monitoire m'y eut autorisé. C'est ce que je certifie comme  
« véritable.

« Signé : AZIMOND,  
« Prêtre, chanoine de Montpezat. »

Un négociant de Nîmes nommé Griolet, qui avait fréquenté trois ans la famille Calas, répondit le 13 fé-

1. Lav., 2.



vrier 1762 à Nanette qui l'avait prié de rendre témoignage en faveur de ses parents : il refusait d'aller déposer en leur faveur parce que « celui qui va faire une révélation en justice sans être assigné à cet effet, rend son témoignage suspect et rejetable<sup>1</sup>. » Ce n'était que trop vrai.

On a reproché encore de nos jours aux Calas<sup>2</sup> de n'avoir eu qu'un témoin à produire (dans la première et la seconde instruction du procès), pour prouver que Marc-Antoine était resté protestant, tandis qu'une foule de témoins déclaraient le contraire. Il est vrai, mais ce n'est pas tout; ce témoin unique et courageux, M<sup>e</sup> Challier, dut user de ruse pour se faire admettre, déclarant à son curé qu'il avait à faire une déposition très-grave et lui laissant croire que c'était en faveur de l'accusation.

On remarquera à ce sujet que la publication d'un monitoire érigeait en juges d'instruction tous les curés, tous les vicaires, tous les prêtres en exercice; aussi existe-t-il au dossier une foule de dépositions écrites qui souvent commencent par les mots : *Par-devant nous*, et qui sont signées d'un prêtre de paroisse, quelquefois même d'un religieux attaché à une église. Ce fait, dans un procès où le protestantisme lui-même se trouva incriminé à chaque instant, mettait donc l'instruction de l'affaire entre les mains, non d'un magistrat, mais du clergé, de tout le clergé à la fois. Disons cependant que le monitoire devait au moins émaner d'un tribunal ecclésiastique et non de l'archevêque, bien moins encore d'un vicaire général<sup>3</sup>. On ne sait pourquoi Lagane

1. La lettre est en original aux Archives Impériales.

2. M. Huc, *Procès*, etc. — Nous trouvons parmi les papiers de Mme Calas une liste de plus de trente témoins à décharge, qui tous auraient dû être cités par les Capitouls et dont plusieurs furent entendus lors du procès de révision. (Collection de M. Fournier.)

3. Mariette (1<sup>er</sup> Mém.) cite à ce sujet le texte suivant :

« C'est au seul Official ou autre juge de la juridiction Ecclésiastique conten-

et David violèrent cette loi; fut-ce par ignorance des formes? Il est difficile d'en soupçonner Lagané. Ou bien pensèrent-ils faire accepter plus facilement leur monitoire, entaché partout de partialité et d'illégalité, en s'adressant au vicaire de l'archevêque<sup>1</sup> absent, et non à un tribunal, plus jaloux peut-être de l'observation des règles?

La loi apportait, il est vrai, un tempérament nécessaire à l'immense puissance des auteurs d'un monitoire; elle leur interdisait, non-seulement de nommer, mais aussi de désigner les personnes incriminées<sup>2</sup>.

Ces préliminaires nous paraissent indispensables pour que le lecteur puisse juger, comme il le mérite, le monitoire suivant. Une affiche de ce Monitoire se trouve aux *Archives*<sup>3</sup>. Elle contient, outre le document lui-même, les demandes d'autorisation adressées par M<sup>e</sup> Pimbert, avocat du roi, aux Capitouls et à l'archevêque, avec la réponse des premiers, et celle de l'abbé de Cambon, vicaire général, pour le second. Dans ces pièces, on leur demande de « *faire publier monitoires sur des cas très-graves, intéressants pour la religion.* » C'était supposer à l'avance, dans une affiche légale apposée sur tous les murs, que Marc-Antoine Calas était mort pour la religion, c'est-à-dire tué par ses parents pour s'être fait catholique. En ce seul mot tout le procès était jugé d'avance.

*tiense à accorder les Monitoires, non à l'Évêque ou à ses Grands Vicaires; sinon il y aurait abus dans cette obtention. »*

(LACOMBE, *Dict. canoniq.*, p. 418.)

1. C'était Arthur-Richard Dillon. Il eut pour successeur en 1763 Étienne-Charles de Loménie de Brienne, qui devint archevêque de Sens, cardinal et premier ministre.

2. Ordonn., t. 7, art. 4. « Les personnes ne pourront être ni nommées ni désignées par les monitoires, à peine de cent livres d'amende contre la partie, et de plus grande s'il y échet. »

« C'eût été, dit avec raison M. Faustin Hélie, livrer leurs noms à la publicité, lorsque leur innocence pouvait être démontrée plus tard. » Ce qui eût été contraire à l'esprit de la procédure *par inquisition*, c'est-à-dire secrète.

3. Arch. imp. Section historique, K, 848. Dans les Archives du parle-

## MONITOIRE.

- 1° Contre tous ceux qui sauront, par ouï dire ou autrement, que le sieur Marc-Antoine Calas aîné avoit renoncé à la religion prétendue Réformée dans laquelle il avoit reçu l'éducation ; qu'il assistoit aux cérémonies de l'Église catholique et romaine ; qu'il se présentoit au sacrement de pénitence, et qu'il devoit faire abjuration publique après le 13 du présent mois d'octobre, et contre tous ceux auxquels Marc-Antoine Calas avoit découvert sa résolution.
- 2° Contre tous ceux qui sauront, par ouï dire ou autrement, qu'à cause de ce changement de croyance, le Sr Marc-Antoine Calas étoit menacé, maltraité, et regardé de mauvais œil dans sa maison ; que la personne qui le menaçoit, lui a dit que s'il faisoit abjuration publique, il n'auroit d'autre bourreau que lui.
- 3° Contre tous ceux qui savent, par ouï dire ou autrement, qu'une femme qui passe pour attachée à l'hérésie, excitoit son mari à de pareilles menaces, et menaçoit elle-même Marc-Antoine Calas.
- 4° Contre tous ceux qui savent, par ouï dire ou autrement, que le 13 du mois courant au matin, il se tint une délibération dans une maison de la paroisse de la Daurade, où la mort de Marc-Antoine Calas fut résolue ou conseillée, et qui auront le même matin, vu entrer ou sortir de ladite maison un certain nombre desdites personnes.
- 5 Contre tous ceux qui savent, par ouï dire ou autrement, que le même jour, 13 du mois d'octobre, depuis l'entrée de la nuit jusques vers les dix heures, cette exécrationnable délibération fut exécutée, en faisant mettre Marc-Antoine Calas à genoux, qui, par surprise ou par force, fut étranglé ou pendu avec une corde à deux nœuds coulants ou baguelles, l'un pour étrangler, et l'autre pour être arrêté au billot, servant à serrer les balles, au moien desquels Marc-Antoine Calas fut étranglé et mis à mort par suspension ou par torsion.
- 6° Contre tous ceux qui ont entendu une voix criant à l'assassin, et de suite, Ah ! mon Dieu, que vous ai-je fait ? faites-moi grâce : la même voix étant devenue plaignante et disant : Ah ! mon Dieu, ah ! mon Dieu !
- 7° Contre tous ceux auxquels Marc-Antoine Calas auroit communiqué les inquiétudes qu'il essuioit dans sa maison, ce qui le rendoit triste et mélancolique.

ment de Toulouse, il en existe autant d'exemplaires qu'il y eut de publications faites dans chaque paroisse, chaque curé ayant renvoyé le monitoire avec l'indication manuscrite des jours et heures où il a été lu au peuple.

8° Contre tous ceux qui savent qu'il arriva de Bordeaux, la veille du 13, un jeune homme de cette ville, qui n'ayant pas trouvé des chevaux pour aller joindre ses parents qui étoient à leur campagne, aiant été arrêté à souper dans une maison, fût présent, consent ou participant à l'action.

9° Contre tous ceux qui savent, par ouï dire ou autrement, qui sont les auteurs, complices, fauteurs, adhérens de ce crime, qui est des plus détestables.

Enfin contre tous sachans et non révélans les faits ci-dessus, circonstances et dépendances.

Ce monitoire, accordé le 17 octobre à la requête du procureur du roi Lagane qui en est l'auteur, fut signé par l'abbé de Cambon<sup>1</sup>, vicaire général, affiché et lu au prône trois dimanches de suite, les 18 et 25 octobre et 8 novembre, dans toutes les paroisses.

Nous verrons que, le 11 décembre, une nouvelle publication du même monitoire fut ordonnée pour le dimanche 13, avec menace de *fulmination* pour le dimanche 20. Le résultat de cette dernière publication n'étant pas encore satisfaisant, le 18 décembre, le procureur général requit en effet la *fulmination* du monitoire :

« Et comme le Procureur général du Roi a lieu de présumer qu'il y a nombre de personnes instruites des faits énoncés audit Monitoire, qui n'ont point donné leurs révélations, leur résistance à satisfaire aux injonctions, etc., oblige à requérir fulmination dudit Monitoire, en la manière accoutumée, dans les paroisses où il aura été publié en vertu de nos ordonnances du 17 oct. au 11 déc.; et excommunions les coupables et participans et ceux qui ont connaissance des faits contenus audit Monitoire et ne les révéleront pas, et vous ordonnons qu'ayés à les dénoncer publiquement au peuple, comme excommuniés par nous. »

*Signé* : l'abbé DE CAMBON, vicaire général.

Dès lors ceux qui auraient omis de déposer étoient excommuniés aussi bien que les meurtriers de Marc-Antoine et leurs complices.

Il y a quelques remarques essentielles à faire sur cet étrange document. La première se présente d'elle-même :

1. Tristan de Cambon, plus tard évêque de Mirepoix.

c'est que dans les articles de ce monitoire il n'y a pas un mot à décharge; rien qui ne soit contre les accusés. Ils avaient déclaré un suicide, et le monitoire même qualifie Marc-Antoine de *triste et mélancolique*; il aurait donc fallu, d'après la loi, poser tout autant de chefs ou questions d'après la supposition du suicide que d'après l'hypothèse du meurtre; rechercher les causes de cette mélancolie, tenir, en un mot, la balance égale entre les deux systèmes. Il n'est pas même fait mention de celui des prévenus, et dans un acte qui devrait être impartial pour demeurer légitime, l'accusation parle seule.

Et comment parle-t-elle? est-ce en se conformant à la loi qui défend de désigner les accusés? Selon l'art. 2, Marc Antoine était « menacé, maltraité et regardé de mauvais œil *dans sa maison.* » Ce mot, deux fois répété, désigne, et ne peut désigner que les accusés, père, mère, frère, et leur unique servante. On ajoute, immédiatement après, que : « la personne qui le menaçait « lui a dit qu'il n'aurait d'autre bourreau que *lui.* » Cette personne était donc un homme de cette maison. Mais lequel? le père ou le frère? Ceci même va être indiqué. « Article 3 — Une femme qui passe pour être attachée à « l'hérésie incitait *son mari* à de pareilles menaces et « menaçait elle-même M.-A. Calas. » Est-il nécessaire de rappeler qu'il n'y avait *dans la maison* d'autres époux que M. et Mme Calas? Ils étaient donc désignés de manière à ce qu'on ne pût s'y méprendre.

Il faut remarquer encore cette expression puérilement partielle : *Ce crime qui est des plus détestables,* lorsque toute la question était précisément de savoir s'il y avait crime, et quel crime.

Ce n'est pas là cependant ce que le monitoire contient de plus monstrueux. Si ses rédacteurs étaient bien informés, il y aurait eu, le 13 au matin, dans une maison de la paroisse de la Daurade, une délibération où le sup-

plice de Marc-Antoine avait été discuté et résolu. A voir cette affreuse accusation si bien détaillée, on s'attend à la trouver attestée par une foule de témoins; on croit en entendre au moins quelques-uns déclarer qu'ils ont vu « entrer et sortir de la maison » en question, les membres du tribunal secret? Quelqu'un avait donc des renseignements sur la réalité de cette assemblée sanguinaire, sur le lieu, le jour et l'heure où elle fut tenue? On s'attend à ce que tous ceux qui ont dénoncé aux auteurs du monitoire ces détails si précis de lieu et de temps iront reproduire en personne devant la justice leurs accablantes révélations, et que s'ils ne l'ont fait avant la fulmination du monitoire, par négligence ou par commisération, la certitude de l'anathème et des peines éternelles va les décider aussitôt après le monitoire fulminé. Il n'en fut rien. D'Aldeguier s'étonne avec raison de voir dans le monitoire ces suppositions qui ne ressortent nullement du commencement d'information déjà accompli; en effet, il n'y a rien qui y ressemble, de près ni de loin, dans les dépositions des témoins entendus jusque-là! Et c'est précisément parce que ces faits, auxquels David et Lagane croyaient et voulaient croire, ne se trouvaient nullement constatés, qu'ils essayèrent d'en obtenir par leur monitoire la démonstration. Ce qui est plus significatif encore, c'est que cette tentative n'eut aucun succès. Dans cette procédure où figurent plus de cent cinquante témoins, on ne trouve aucune trace de ces grossières faussetés, à l'exception de quelques oui-dire, tous plus vagues que le monitoire lui-même. Comment tout le monde ne saurait-il pas « par oui-dire *ou autrement* » ce qui a été lu au prône quatre dimanches, affiché partout, *fulminé* en cérémonie, ce dont la ville entière s'est entretenue avec passion pendant cinq mois? Au lieu de devenir plus précis, plus circonstanciés, ces abominables détails s'effacent à mesure

que la procédure avance, et finissent par disparaître<sup>1</sup>.

Il n'est rien qu'on n'ait tenté pour avoir des preuves sur ce point capital. Voici à ce sujet un des interrogatoires de Mme Calas. On remarquera que la première question est un piège que lui tend le juge<sup>2</sup>. Si elle avait paru approuver ce que l'interrogateur feignait de penser lui-même, on y aurait vu un argument contre elle et un aveu de l'affreuse doctrine qu'on prêtait à son Église. La réponse est excellente.

« *Interrogée* si elle ne sait qu'un père est le juge souverain de la religion de son fils.

*Répond* que c'est la conscience et les lumières qui doivent nous faire décider et non l'autorité d'un père.

*Interrogée* si son mary ou son fils ne luy communiquèrent la résolution ou le conseil de la secte au sujet de l'abjuration qu'on croyoit projetée de la part de M -A. Calas son fils, et quelle étoit cette résolution ou conseil.

*Répond* et dénie l'interrogatoire en tous ses chefs.

*Interrogée* si elle et son mari ne dirent qu'il falloit se soumettre à la résolution prise par le conseil de la dite secte.

*Répond* et dénie l'interrogatoire, ne luy ayant jamais été parlé de rien, ny entendu parler<sup>3</sup>. »

Nous verrons ailleurs dans ce procès que les soldats de garde étaient l'*ultima ratio* de l'accusation aux abois, non sans doute que les juges leur dictassent de faux témoignages, mais apparemment, parce que les gardes voyaient le dépit où l'on était de ne pas trouver les preuves que l'on avait espérées. C'est encore contre Lavaysse, en sa prétendue qualité de bourreau en titre

1. Voir Pièces justif. VIII à la fin du vol.

2. « Les anciens légistes, dit M. Faustin Hélie (op. c.), ont essayé de poser une limite où devaient s'arrêter les questions captieuses, les artifices de l'interrogateur; ils ne voyaient pas que, dans une procédure qui n'admettait pas la discussion contradictoire des charges, il y avait une sorte de nécessité d'arracher à l'accusé son aveu soit par l'adresse, soit par la torture. Le juge avait besoin de cet aveu pour la propre tranquillité de sa conscience; la loi le faisait artificieux et inhumain par cela même qu'il était honnête. »

3. Interr. du 20 octobre. (Arch. Imp.)

d'office, qu'est dirigée l'inepte calomnie qu'on va lire. Pierre Vergès, soldat, dépose :

Qu'étant un jour de garde dans la chambre du Sr Lavaysse et se promenant dans ladite chambre, ledit Lavaysse lui dit « qu'il avait trouvé dans un livre qu'il n'était pas dommage d'étrangler une personne, que nous venions de terre, et qu'il y (sic) fallait y retourner la même chose. Le déposant lui répliqua que notre religion ne permettoit pas pareille chose, sur quoy ledit Lavaysse se retourna vers le feu sans plus mot dire. »

Évidemment Pierre Vergès a mal compris sa leçon ou mal inventé son conte. Dans quel livre Lavaysse aurait-il lu qu'il n'y a pas de mal à étrangler les gens ? Il ne s'agit pas même ici d'un livre protestant et d'une justification fanatique de l'assassinat des apostats, il s'agit d'une apologie générale du meurtre. Le soldat de garde prête à Lavaysse le même propos qu'il prêterait à un assassin de profession, ou un meurtrier à gages. Il ne se rend pas compte de l'accusation à laquelle il vient en aide. Et quelle apparence que ce jeune homme en danger d'être mis à mort comme assassin, aille professer la théorie du meurtre au soldat qui le garde ? Était-ce pour se faire condamner ?

Nous avons cherché longtemps en vain quelle pouvait être la pensée du procureur du Roi, en nommant la paroisse de la Daurade, qui n'était point celle des Calas, comme celle où se serait tenue l'assemblée des protestants. Il n'existe de renseignement à cet égard que dans un Mémoire inédit de la Beaumelle<sup>1</sup>, Il nous apprend, et il devait le savoir, lui qui avait habité Toulouse, que Cazeing demeurait dans la paroisse désignée, et que l'accusation lui attribuait ce rôle dans le meurtre, apparemment parce qu'il était impossible de lui en supposer aucun autre<sup>2</sup>. On

1. Voir plus bas, pages 259, 260.

2. Cette conjecture est confirmée par l'interrogatoire que subit Jean Calas au moment de la torture, et d'où il résulte que Cazeing demeurait



l'avait relâché, à la suite des interrogatoires d'office, quand on se fut assuré qu'il n'avait point passé la soirée chez les Calas et n'y était entré qu'amené par Lavaysse et Pierre, après que tout était fini. Mais on le mit en liberté *sans ordonnance*, et aucun acte légal ne constata son innocence.

Dès qu'il vit que rien de pareil à cette délibération meurtrière ne pouvait être prouvé, Lagane qui, s'il n'avait inventé cette calomnie, la tenait de quelqu'un, aurait dû remonter à la source de ce bruit odieux, interroger, poursuivre même celui ou ceux qui l'avaient trompé. On n'en sut jamais rien ; un silence aussi suspect a toujours désappointé ceux qui ont prétendu ou prétendent encore accuser de la mort de Calas aîné les protestants de Toulouse en général ; et l'on a publié, à ce sujet, il y a quelques années, une historiette de couvent<sup>1</sup> qui ne soutient pas un instant d'examen pour disculper le monitoire et pour accuser les protestants.

Le monitoire ne prétend pas seulement savoir quand et où la sentence de Marc-Antoine avait été rendue, mais encore comment elle avait été exécutée ; on avait fait mettre Marc-Antoine à *genoux* pour l'étrangler plus facilement. Qui avait dit cela ? qui l'avait vu ? et si nul ne l'avait vu, lequel des coupables l'avait avoué ? où avait-on pris cette mise en scène d'un crime que rien ne démontrait ?

Ce monument prodigieux d'illégalité et de prévention absurde, ce roman créé de toutes pièces par l'imagination des magistrats, ne satisfait pas complètement la haine populaire. Quoique l'on eût d'abord fixé au 13 la sentence imaginaire des protestants contre le défunt, on

sur la place de la Bourse qui est, en effet, dans la paroisse de la Daurade.

1. Voir plus bas, au chapitre xiv, le conte du chevalier de Cazals rapporté par M. du Mége.

en supposa une autre antérieure, à la suite de laquelle ils auraient mandé de Bordeaux Lavaysse, le *porte-épée*, considéré comme l'exécuteur attitré des assassinats de famille au sein de l'Église réformée, et qui serait venu à Toulouse uniquement pour étrangler Marc-Antoine, sur l'ordre des anciens et des ministres du saint Évangile. Ce système, plus ridicule, s'il est possible, que révoltant, a été remis en lumière de nos jours<sup>1</sup>.

Selon l'opinion des Toulousains, l'usage, bien plus, la loi religieuse parmi les protestants, les obligeait à punir de mort ceux qui se convertissaient à l'Église romaine; leurs propres parents étaient tenus de les dénoncer, et même d'aider, s'il le fallait, à l'exécution de la sentence prononcée par les chefs de l'Église et exécutée par des bourreaux spéciaux. Plus cette calomnie inouïe rendait les protestants exécrationnels, plus elle fut avidement accueillie par les esprits prévenus contre eux; après avoir été jetée en avant par quelque fanatique de la rue, au milieu du trouble que causa la découverte du cadavre, cette atroce imputation fut développée, systématisée dans le monitoire et y parut revêtue du double sceau de la justice et de la religion, signée et paraphée par un avocat du Roi et un grand-vicaire de l'archevêque.

Parmi les protestants de Toulouse, du Languedoc, de toute la France et plus tard de toute l'Europe, la surprise et l'horreur furent au comble. Pour trouver une calomnie à comparer à celle-là, il fallait remonter jusqu'aux premiers chrétiens accusés par les païens de manger et de boire dans la sainte Cène le corps et le sang d'un enfant égorgé au milieu des plus infâmes débauches.

Par cette accusation, on enveloppait dans l'opprobre des Calas tous leurs coreligionnaires et on rendait sus-

1. Voir plus bas, ch. XIV.

pecte à l'avance, comme l'a très-bien remarqué un magistrat éclairé<sup>1</sup>, toute déposition qui pourrait être faite en leur faveur par leurs frères en la foi. Aucun protestant ne pouvait déposer pour eux, sans se faire accuser immédiatement de parler pour se défendre lui-même et pour justifier son Église; aussi n'y eut-il pas un protestant parmi les témoins; ils n'auraient pu que nuire aux accusés, et ceux-ci ne durent attendre aucun secours que des membres de l'Église romaine, persécutrice de leur culte.

Si personne ne vint démontrer la réalité du tribunal secret des protestants, il ne manqua pas de témoins pour les déclarer coutumiers du fait, pour affirmer que plusieurs prosélytes avaient péri récemment par le même supplice que Marc-Antoine, c'est-à-dire étranglés, à Lavaur, à Castres, etc. En voici un exemple choisi entre plusieurs, où l'on verra en même temps un de ces ouï-dire dont l'origine est insaisissable et qui sont, dans ce procès, la ressource habituelle de l'accusation.

Pierre Lagrèze<sup>2</sup>, maître tailleur, 61<sup>e</sup> témoin, déclare *tenir du nommé Bonnemaison qu'on lui avait dit qu'un paysan de Caraman, ayant entendu parler de la mort dudit Calas, avait dit que cela n'était pas surprenant, et qu'on en avait étranglé cinq ou six à Caraman de la même façon.*

Comme la famille Lavaysse était de Caraman et y habitait, cette accusation de quatrième main, tout en incriminant les protestants en général, tendait en outre à faire soupçonner cette famille d'habitudes meurtrières invétérées; en tous cas, il devenait presque naturel que Lavaysse se chargeât d'une fonction si fréquemment exercée dans un lieu où résidaient tous les siens et où il avait résidé lui-même.

1. La Salle, *Observations*, etc., voir *Bibliographie*, n° 5.

2. Arch. Imp.

Qu'une assemblée religieuse de huguenots eût voté un assassinat, en eût chargé un jeune homme de vingt ans, et eût obligé, on ne sait pourquoi, à participer au meurtre le frère de la victime, son propre père, sa mère elle-même, et enfin, pour comble de démence, une catholique dévote, cela était trop révoltant pour ne pas être cru avec empressement et soutenu avec fureur. Cela est encore aujourd'hui cru et soutenu. Pourquoi ? parce que plus une imputation est démesurée, effroyable, inouïe, et moins les âmes prévenues et passionnées renoncent à en accabler leurs adversaires ; on a réponse à tout quand on peut répéter avec conviction le mot de Tertullien : *Credo quia ineptum* 'c'est parce que cela est absurde que je le crois'. « Ces gens-là, se disait-on, étant les ennemis de l'Eglise, sont capables de tout ; nous le savions bien, mais en voilà la preuve et elle est d'autant meilleure qu'elle est plus incroyable<sup>1</sup>. »

Dans un Mémoire anonyme où respire le bon sens calme et réfléchi qui est une des premières qualités d'un juge<sup>2</sup>, M. de La Salle, le seul membre du parlement de Toulouse qui ait défendu l'innocence des Calas, expose ce qu'auraient dû faire les Capitouls et le procureur du Roi, d'après les lois de l'époque, au lieu de lancer ce monitoire qui enflamma les esprits et envenime tout dans le procès.

« Il fallait, pour se conformer aux règles de l'ordre judiciaire, ordonner en termes vagues qu'il serait enquis touchant la mort de M.-A. Calas et pourvoir de curateur au cadavre, pour, le cas échéant, défendre sa mémoire du crime de suicide. »

On était entré dans une voie bien différente et on ne

1. La haine est crédule ; rien pour elle n'est ni trop horrible, ni trop ridicule ; c'est ainsi qu'on accuse quelquefois encore les juifs de commettre en Orient, à la fête de Pâques, le même crime dont les païens accusaient les premiers chrétiens ; c'est ainsi encore que le bas peuple en Angleterre, pendant les guerres de la République et de l'Empire, était persuadé que les Français vivaient de grenouilles.

2. Voir *Bibliogr.*, n° 5.

ne s'arrêta pas là. Si Marc-Antoine n'était pas un suicidé dont le corps devait être traîné sur la claie et accroché au gibet, il était un martyr, étranglé pour la cause de l'Église, qui lui devait les honneurs funèbres les plus solennels et les plus retentissants. Il fut décidé entre Lagane, David et l'un de ses collègues, le Capitoul Jean-Baptiste Chirac, que le corps serait inhumé sans délai. C'était une mesure hardie et inutile : inutile, car il était entouré de chaux et rien ne rendait l'ensevelissement nécessaire ; hardie, car on risquait de commettre un double sacrilège en ensevelissant au milieu de toutes les pompes de l'Église romaine, et en terre sainte, un protestant et un suicidé, que toute sa famille et la servante catholique déclaraient tel.

Enfin, c'était juger le procès avant le tribunal ; car tout le procès se réduisait à cette seule question : Marc-Antoine Calas est-il un suicidé ou un martyr ? Après avoir tranché d'avance et publiquement ce dilemme, des juges consciencieux auraient dû, d'après la loi, se récuser eux-mêmes.

Aucune de ces considérations si sages ne fut écoutée. Ce fut une sorte de complot entre le Procureur du Roi et ces deux Capitouls. Le 7 novembre, Lagane requit *pour le Roi* les Capitouls d'ordonner l'inhumation, « attendu que ce cadavre est déposé dans la chambre de la gêne depuis plus de trois semaines et qu'une foule de motifs en rendent l'enterrement nécessaire. » Il eût été difficile d'indiquer cette foule de motifs, puisqu'on avait pris les précautions nécessaires pour éviter la décomposition. David et Chirac, pour éviter les objections qu'auraient pu élever leurs collègues, commandèrent les obsèques, sans convoquer régulièrement le *Consistoire*, dans un moment où ils se trouvaient seuls avec deux assesseurs dont ils étaient sûrs. Le Parlement était en vacances, mais la Chambre des vacations aurait pu intervenir. David s'assura le consentement verbal de deux

présidents, presque aussi prévenus que lui<sup>1</sup>. Tout étant ainsi préparé, les deux Capitouls (dit M. d'Aldeguier dans son *Histoire de Toulouse*) invitèrent le curé de Saint-Étienne, dans la paroisse duquel les Calas avaient leur domicile, à rendre catholiquement les honneurs funèbres au corps de Marc-Antoine Calas et à l'enterrer dans sa paroisse. Le curé ne refusa pas d'obtempérer à l'invitation des Capitouls, comme l'écrit Voltaire mal instruit; le zèle était si grand, au contraire, parmi les membres du clergé, dans cette dernière occasion, que le curé du Taur (Cazalès, oncle du député de ce nom aux états généraux) fit signifier aux Capitouls un acte pour qu'ils eussent à lui livrer le corps de Marc-Antoine Calas, déposé à l'hôtel de ville dépendant de sa paroisse, afin de lui rendre les honneurs funèbres dans son église, les déclarant passibles de dommages et intérêts en cas de refus<sup>2</sup>.

Rien ne fut négligé pour donner à la cérémonie le plus grand retentissement. L'inhumation eut lieu avec tout l'éclat possible. On fit tout pour persuader que Marc-Antoine était un martyr. On choisit pour ses funérailles un dimanche à trois heures de l'après-midi, afin que la population fût plus libre d'y prendre part ou d'en être témoin. Un cortège immense, conduit par plus de quarante prêtres, alla faire la levée du corps à l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Les Pénitents blancs y figuraient portant cierges et bannière, parce qu'on prétendait que Marc-Antoine avait eu l'intention de se joindre à eux. Une foule énorme assista au service dans la cathédrale de Saint-Étienne et grossit le convoi. Le corps fut inhumé dans le bas côté de l'église Saint-Jacques ou Sainte-Anne qui dépend de la métropolitaine.

Cette fastueuse démonstration ne fut que le prélude

1. Voir, dans les Pièces justif., la lettre V, adressée au ministre par M. de Senaux, qui présidait les vacations.

2. Tous ces détails sont prouvés par des documents authentiques.

d'autres cérémonies plus regrettables encore. Quelques jours après l'inhumation, les Pénitents blancs firent célébrer dans leur chapelle un service magnifique pour l'âme du martyr. Tous les ordres religieux y furent invités et y assistèrent par leurs députations. L'église entière était tendue de blanc; et pour frapper plus violemment les esprits, on avait érigé au centre de l'édifice un catafalque magnifique, au sommet duquel était debout un squelette (loué à un chirurgien). On lisait le nom du défunt aux pieds de cette hideuse représentation, qui tenait de la main droite une palme, emblème du martyr, et de l'autre, cette inscription en gros caractères :

#### ABJURATION DE L'HÉRÉSIE.

Ce service ne fut pas le seul. Il y en eut un second chez MM. les Cordeliers de la Grande Observance.

On comprend l'effet de toutes ces cérémonies lugubres, frappant coup sur coup des imaginations déjà excitées. Le peuple de Toulouse, et nous entendons par ce mot la ville presque entière, demeura convaincu que Calas le suicidé était mort catholique, pénitent blanc et martyr, que les autorités ecclésiastiques et judiciaires en avaient trouvé la preuve dans la procédure secrète, que les accusés étaient les derniers des scélérats et la religion des protestants une peste publique, l'école du parricide, l'horreur et le fléau du monde. C'était précisément ce qu'on avait voulu.

Le prétexte de cette prise de possession d'un mort par une Église et une confrérie auxquelles il n'appartint jamais, fut, à ce qu'il paraît, la honteuse faiblesse, les perpétuelles inconséquences de Louis Calas. Il était lui-même pénitent blanc et n'osa s'opposer dès le premier moment à l'acte qu'on voulait célébrer. Il y assista même, mais ce fut pour protester. Il s'y trouva

mal ou fit semblant; on l'emmena dans la sacristie, puis dans la chambre du trésorier, le véritable chef de la confrérie. Là, il fit appeler un huissier, et après s'être réconforté avec un peu de pain et de vin, il tira un papier de sa poche et le présenta, sans dire un mot, à l'huissier Antoine Rougion, qu'on lui avait amené. C'était un acte sur papier timbré par lequel Louis, comme procureur légal de son père détenu, interpellait les pénitents blancs de dire de quel droit et sur quelles preuves ils avaient considéré Marc-Antoine comme un des leurs, et les somrait d'exhiber leurs registres, si son nom y était inscrit<sup>1</sup>. Le sous-prieur des pénitents, qui était un procureur nommé Arbanère, lui répondit qu'il avait dit lui-même que Marc-Antoine serait bientôt des leurs. Un autre pénitent, le tapissier Diaque, dépose qu'il en convint. Mais l'huissier et le sous-prieur déclarent tous deux qu'il se tut<sup>2</sup>. Il est clair que ces gens, et surtout l'abbé Durand, faisaient dire à ce malheureux tout ce qu'ils voulaient; il n'osait les démentir<sup>3</sup>, et à peine avait-il fait un pas pour sauver ses parents, il semblait s'effrayer de sa propre hardiesse. Le trésorier répondit à cet acte « que c'était uniquement le zèle de la Compagnie qui l'avait porté à faire ce service pour l'âme du défunt et pour le plus grand souvenir et la gloire de Dieu, que d'ailleurs il tenait de Louis Calas que le défunt son frère devait incessamment se faire recevoir dans la susdite Archiconfrérie. »

1. Il n'avait pu voir ni consulter ses parents; mais ceux-ci, interrogés sur cet acte, déclarèrent plus tard qu'ils l'approuvaient et le prenaient sous leur responsabilité, quoiqu'ils n'en eussent point eu connaissance.

2. Tout ce qui précède est extrait des dépositions de ces trois hommes.

3. Ainsi, ce même sous-prieur Arbanère rapporte que Louis Calas, le lendemain de la mort de son frère, vint lui faire une visite avec les abbés Durand et Benaben. Ils trouvèrent plusieurs personnes chez lui. Durand aurait raconté alors que Marc-Antoine était devenu un très-dévoth catholique et allait faire sa première communion. Louis, non-seulement n'aurait pas nié le fait, mais l'aurait confirmé.



Il n'est pas absolument impossible que Louis se fût vanté auprès de ses amis, prêtres ou pénitents, que tel ou tel de ses frères et sœurs se convertiraient ; c'est du moins ce qu'ont déclaré quelques témoins à propos de Marc-Antoine, d'Anne-Rose, de Pierre. Il devait désirer vivement que son exemple fût suivi par eux ; et comme il connaissait le mécontentement de son frère aîné et la cause de son désappointement il pouvait, à le juger d'après lui-même, espérer de le voir abjurer. Au reste, comme l'a déclaré sa mère<sup>1</sup>, s'il l'a dit, il n'en pouvait rien savoir, car il ne voyait jamais les siens. Il ne leur parlait pas même, à moins qu'il ne rencontrât l'un d'eux quand sa pension était en retard.

Il ne paraît pas que la protestation si timidement remise à l'huissier Rougian ait eu aucune suite. Mais bien plus tard, et après le supplice de Jean Calas, sa veuve usa de la liberté qui lui était rendue pour sommer par huissier M. Laffitau, trésorier des pénitents blancs, de dire en quoi Marc-Antoine Calas avait appartenu à sa Confrérie.

Nous donnons textuellement sa réponse<sup>2</sup>, dont on appréciera la nullité honteuse et embarrassée ; on y verra ce personnage chercher en vain à s'appuyer de prétendus cas analogues qui ne le sont nullement, et s'abriter le plus possible sous l'autorité du curé de Saint-Étienne.

Du 13 décembre 1762, M<sup>e</sup> Lafittau, trésorier de MM. les Pénitents blancs de cette ville, répond :

« Que lorsqu'il eut appris qu'on devait enterrer M.-A. Calas et que M. le curé de Saint-Etienne devoit faire les cérémonies, le Répondant envoya un confrere Penitent Blanc, chés le Sr Louis Calas, aussi confrere, et frere du defunt, pour savoir si ledit Louis Calas auroit pour agreable que la Compagnie des Penitents Blancs assistat à l'enterrement de son dit frere, a quoi le dit Louis Calas fit repondre que la douleur dont il étoit pénétré ne

1. Confr. de la D<sup>lle</sup> Calas.

2. Arch. Imp.

lui permettoit pas de répondre comme il le désiroit à la politesse des pénitents, qu'ils n'avoient qu'à faire comme ils jugeroient à propos; sur quoi, et par l'attachement que la Compagnie a toujours eu pour Louis Calas son confrère, le répondant envoya la dite Compagnie pour assister au dit enterrement et que, quoique la Compagnie des Pénitents Blancs ne soit obligée que d'assister à l'inhumation de ses confrères, cependant elle répond souvent à la prière des parents et assiste aux enterrements de plusieurs particuliers lorsqu'elle en est priée par les parents et pour leur faire honneur; et dans ce dernier cas, elle ne peut exiger aucun droit de chapelle. Le répondant ajoute qu'il fit faire dans la chapelle des Pénitents Blancs, un service pour le repos de l'âme de Marc-Antoine Calas, ou les religieux de divers ordres vinrent assister, et dire des messes, qu'il a fait faire dresser un cataphalque (sic), tendre l'Eglise en noir et qu'on lisoit au bas d'un squelette ces mots : *Marc-Antoine Calas*, service et cérémonie qui furent faits solennellement pour faire honneur à Louis Calas, Pénitent Blanc, et pour servir pour ledit Marc-Antoine, enterré par le curé de Saint-Etienne avec les cérémonies de l'Eglise. Requis le répondant de signer, a dit n'être nécessaire. »

Dans une des confrontations de Mme Calas, elle se souvient qu'un témoin qu'on lui oppose est pénitent blanc. Il s'agit précisément de savoir si Marc-Antoine a songé à se faire catholique. Elle repousse avec une remarquable énergie et avec un bon sens imperturbable le témoignage du pénitent et lui arrache un important aveu. Mme Calas vient de demander si le témoin (le tailleur Lacour) n'est pas pénitent blanc :

« Le témoin répondant a dit qu'il est vrai qu'il est confrère pénitent blanc, et que ce qu'il a déposé, il ne l'a déposé que par l'ordre de son directeur.

« Et l'accusée a dit qu'elle n'est pas étonnée que le témoin ait déposé ainsi, étant pénitent blanc, et pour mettre à couvert cette compagnie d'avoir outrepassé l'acte qu'ils lui firent faire, de ne pas faire le service pour M.-A. Calas son fils; persistant toujours à dire que la déposition du témoin est fausse.

« Il répond qu'il va très-rarement aux pénitents blancs, et qu'il n'a assisté ni à l'enterrement, ni au service de M.-A. Calas. Et l'accusée a dit que quoiqu'il n'y assistât pas, il n'est pas moins intéressé à soutenir cette compagnie. »

Voltaire, nous l'avons demandé ailleurs. exagérail-il

beaucoup quand il écrivait à la duchesse de Saxe Gotha : « S'il n'y avait point eu de pénitents blancs à Toulouse, cette catastrophe affreuse (le supplice de Jean Calas) ne serait point arrivée? » (Voir *Voltaire à Ferney*, p. 250.)

Il n'était que trop vrai. Des quatre confréries toulousaines, la blanche était la première et la plus influente<sup>1</sup>; elle avait des affiliés dans tous les rangs. Et depuis le service funèbre de Marc-Antoine, les accusés eurent à lutter, presque sans défense, non-seulement contre les Capitouls, le Parlement et le Clergé, mais contre cette confrérie puissante qui, deux fois, avait pris parti contre eux, le jour de l'inhumation et le jour du service célébré par elle-même; c'étaient des affronts pour la confrérie, que des sommations comme celle de Louis Calas, ce même jour, et de sa mère un an plus tard.

Il est curieux de voir comment aujourd'hui les accusateurs de Calas jugent les démonstrations si passionnées du clergé d'alors. Écoutons notre contradicteur M. Salvan, chanoine honoraire de Toulouse (Op. c. p. 97) : « La pompe catholique que l'on déploya à ces obsèques, les services mortuaires qui furent célébrés dans deux églises de la ville, doivent être regardés comme une *concession faite à l'opinion publique*, à la *conscience* de la *plupart* des citoyens. Il est *possible* qu'on ait été *un peu* trop loin dans les honneurs rendus à la dépouille mortelle de Marc-Antoine; mais ces incidents ne méritent pas l'importance que les partisans de Calas ont voulu leur donner. » Entre les Calas et cette confrérie, il ne devait plus y avoir de trêve; leur nom devint funeste aux pénitents, sans qu'ils y fussent pour rien et l'on peut voir au *Moniteur* du samedi 8 avril 1792, jour où furent supprimées par décrets les Congrégations

1. On disait à Toulouse : Antiquité des blancs, Noblesse des bleus, Richesse des noirs, Pauvreté des gris.

et les Confréries, que le député Ducos évoqua contre ces corporations le souvenir du rôle joué par les pénitents blancs de Toulouse « dans la procédure ourdie contre l'infortuné Calas »

Il est certain que bien des gens à Toulouse crurent faire un acte agréable à Dieu, à la Vierge et aux saints, en venant accabler de leurs accusations les bourreaux dénaturés d'un pénitent blanc. A l'ouïe de certaines dépositions, on est tenté de répéter ce mot, un peu déclamatoire, mais vrai, d'Élie de Beaumont<sup>1</sup> : « Ces malheureux viennent de forger leur témoignage sur les degrés du mausolée où ils invoquaient un martyr. »

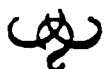
Nous en citerons des exemples; on verra, dans quelques-uns, les faux témoignages les plus nettement caractérisés, et, dans les autres, les rêves d'une population méridionale dont on a surexcité coup sur coup l'imagination, et de véritables *visions populaires enfan- tées par le fanatisme*, comme l'a dit un historien<sup>2</sup>.

L'enthousiasme de la foule se jette toujours dans les extrêmes. On prétendait que Louis Calas, entendant la messe à la chapelle des Chevaliers de Saint-Jean, était tombé en extase au moment de l'*élévation*, et s'était écrié tout haut : « Mon Dieu, pardonnez mes parents qui ont fait mourir mon frère ! » Le bruit courut que trois ou quatre miracles avaient eu lieu sur la tombe de Marc-Antoine; on prétendait que le clergé avait écrit au Pape pour qu'il lui plût de canoniser ce martyr. On disait qu'un jour lui avait été consacré dans le calendrier, et l'on commençait dans le peuple à débattre le choix de celle des églises de Toulouse qui serait placée sous l'invocation du nouveau saint<sup>3</sup>.

1. E. de B., 3.

2. Ch. Coquerel, *Égl. du Dés.*, t. II.

3. Voir surtout, à propos de ces bruits absurdes, le Mémoire écrit à Toulouse par le conseiller de La Salle, p. 66.





## CHAPITRE VI.

### PROCÉDURE ET ARRÊT DES CAPITOUXS.

**Information secrète. — Briefs intendits. — Faits justificatifs. — Autopsie du cadavre. — Pièges tendus à Lavaysse. — Affaire de M<sup>r</sup> Monyer. — Affaire d'Espaillac. — Sentence des Capitouls. — Double appel des condamnés et du ministère public.**

Il ne faut que jeter un coup d'œil sur la procédure pour reconnaître l'esprit de vertige et de rumeur populaire qui en a été le principe. Tout y est sans fondement et hors de la plus légère vraisemblance.

Le comte de ROCHECHOUART.

(*Lettre à Saint-Florentin, Parme, 5 déc. 1761.*)

L'instruction criminelle se poursuivait pendant ce temps par les soins du procureur du Roi et des Capitouls. Rien de plus informe que cette procédure ; aucun des accusateurs modernes de Calas n'a osé la justifier. L'impétueux David y commit faute sur faute. Mais il faut convenir que la législation du temps prêtait à l'arbitraire. Il faut se rappeler qu'il n'y avait, en matière criminelle, ni audience publique, ni débat, ni plaidoirie, que l'accusé n'avait pas même de conseil ou d'avocat<sup>1</sup>, et que la procédure secrète, ou *par inquisi-*

1. L'accusé devait répondre *sans délai, par sa bouche, et sans le ministère de conseil*. L'Ordonnance de 1670 était, sur ce point, très positive.

*tion*, comme on l'appelait, d'abord établie par le droit canonique et pratiquée dans les tribunaux ecclésiastiques, était devenue la seule employée par les autres magistrats <sup>1</sup>.

L'interrogatoire de l'accusé et l'audition des témoins avaient toujours lieu *secrètement* et *séparément* devant le juge seul, assisté de son greffier, et étaient toujours précédés du serment prêté par l'interrogé, qu'il fût témoin ou accusé. Ensuite avait lieu le *recolement*, qui consistait à lire (non sans un nouveau serment) au témoin ses propres réponses, et à lui demander s'il y persistait. Il y avait encore serment à chaque *confrontation* de l'accusé avec un des témoins. « L'information et les interrogatoires formaient l'instruction préparatoire; ils étaient destinés à faire reconnaître le caractère du fait et à éclairer la marche de la procédure. Les recolements et les confrontations formaient l'instruction définitive; ils avaient pour but d'établir l'existence du crime et la culpabilité de l'accusé. Ces actes remplaçaient le débat contradictoire de l'audience, la discussion et les plaidoiries; ils portaient en eux toutes les garanties du jugement <sup>2</sup>. »

Quand on mettait en présence le prévenu et un témoin, on demandait aussitôt au prévenu s'il *reprochait* le témoin, en l'avertissant que s'il attendait de l'avoir oui, il ne serait plus temps. Si l'accusé, ne connaissant pas le témoin ou se fiant à lui, ne le reprochait pas, il était à la merci de ce que le témoin pouvait dire; il était censé l'avoir approuvé d'avance <sup>3</sup>. Dès que Mme Calas eut compris cela à ses dépens, elle prit résolument le parti de *reprocher* tous les témoins qu'on lui présentait, disant, quand elle ne les connaissait pas, qu'ils pouvaient avoir des motifs de lui nuire, à elle inconnus.

1. Voir la note 12.

2. *Faustin Hélie*, op. c., p. 634. — 3. Voir la note 13.

Une absurdité légale qu'on a peine à s'expliquer est celle de l'interrogatoire sur *la sellette*, que subirent les cinq accusés dans le procès Calas. Cette façon solennelle d'interroger un homme pour la dernière fois en présence de tous ses juges réunis, afin de savoir s'il était coupable ou innocent, était considérée comme déshonorante <sup>1</sup>.

Nous avons déjà signalé l'impossibilité où se trouvait l'accusé de dire ou de faire dire par les témoins ce qu'on ne lui demandait pas ; il n'avait aucun droit d'appeler ou présenter des témoins à décharge<sup>2</sup> : c'était au juge à le faire. Il y a bien plus ; quand il existait des faits qui pouvaient justifier le prévenu, il fallait qu'il demandât et obtînt de ses juges la permission d'en faire la preuve<sup>3</sup>. Cette permission ne fut accordée aux Calas pour aucun des faits justificatifs, nombreux et concluants, que leur avocat demandait à démontrer. L'avocat Sudre en présenta onze dans son premier Mémoire, et d'autres encore dans les deux Mémoires suivants. On ne daigna point y faire droit <sup>4</sup>.

De tous ces obstacles laborieusement accumulés sur le chemin de la justice, le plus singulier, peut-être, est ce qu'on appelait *brief interdit*. Toutes les questions auxquelles un accusé ou un témoin devait répondre étaient écrites à l'avance. Il pouvait arriver que la réponse faite à la première question rendît toutes les

1. Par contre, la torture n'était pas infamante et les jurisconsultes discutaient gravement entre eux pour savoir si elle devait être considérée comme une peine. M. Faustin Hélie répond que oui et cite des autorités, mais nous avons vu le contraire affirmé par plusieurs auteurs de l'époque.

2. Ordonnance criminelle. — Faustin Hélie. Op. c., p. 620.

3. En tous cas cette permission ne pouvait se donner qu'après instruction terminée. Souvent alors il n'était plus temps. Voir la note 14.

4. Les juges devaient *faire droit* sur les faits justificatifs, soit en ordonnant la preuve de ces faits par témoins, soit, s'ils n'y avaient égard, en le disant expressément dans l'arrêt (Ordonn. crim. titre 15, art. 19. Ordonn., titre des faits justif., art. 2, 3, 4. Ord. d'août 1586, art. 20. Ord. de 1639, art. 58.)



autres inutiles; il arrivait sans cesse que le juge lui-même s'apercevait que l'interrogatoire aurait dû être dirigé autrement. Il ne devait pas moins se renfermer dans les termes prévus et écrits, sauf à recommencer plus tard en préparant un autre *intendit*. On a pu voir déjà, dans un fragment d'interrogatoire de Mme Calas, cité plus haut, que les questions ne suivent en rien les réponses et n'en tiennent aucun compte. On conçoit facilement quelle confusion cette étrange méthode devait souvent produire dans l'esprit des accusés<sup>1</sup>.

Il y a tel interrogatoire dans le procès Calas, où l'interrogateur et l'interrogé semblent jouer à ce que les enfants appellent *le jeu des propos interrompus*. Le principal défaut de cet usage, c'est que rien n'est plus propre, comme le remarquait Grimm, à faire dire à un témoin tout ce qu'on veut. Cette méthode, expressément abolie, quant aux témoins, par l'*Ordonnance de 1670*, était restée en vigueur à Toulouse, malgré cette Ordonnance qui était alors la loi organique de la Procédure criminelle.

Ces formes, si absolues, étaient de nouvelles armes entre les mains de l'accusation. On a remarqué que les *briefs intendits*, soit pour les accusés, soit pour les témoins, sont tous rédigés comme le Monitoire, c'est-à-dire en vue de prouver le martyre de Marc-Antoine, et ne posent jamais la question du suicide. En tout ceci David, Chirac et leur greffier Savanier, Lagane, Pimbert qui, à ce qu'il paraît, rédigea les intendits, n'ont pas cessé un seul instant de chercher la vérité à la façon de certains théologiens. Ils étaient déterminés à trouver la vérité telle qu'ils l'avaient conçue à l'avance et ne se détournaient jamais, ni à droite ni à gauche,

1. Nous citons (Pièces justifiées. XII, à la fin du volume) un *brief intendit* qui donnera une idée de ce genre de pièces; qu'on le lise en se rappelant ce que Lavaysse pouvait répondre à toutes ces questions répétées et compliquées de tant de manières différentes.

de cette voie étroite et dangereuse. Aussi, Elie de Beaumont a-t-il raison de dire que les témoins furent plutôt interrogés qu'entendus ; en d'autres termes, à une seule exception près, on ne leur donna moyen de dire que ce qu'on voulait entendre.

Une autre injustice et illégalité fut commise à l'égard des Calas : on ne les confronta point avec les experts qui examinèrent le cadavre<sup>1</sup>. Ce genre de confrontation était cependant nécessaire pour éclaircir et déterminer les parties conjecturales de leurs rapports. Ainsi le chirurgien Lamarque, chargé de l'autopsie le 15 octobre, trouva dans l'estomac « quelques pos 'de rézins avec  
« quelque peau de volaille, quelque morceau d'autre  
« viande qui nous a paru estre du buf. Ces espèces  
« de viande que nous avons lavé dans de l'eau claire  
« nous a paru être fort dure et tout corriasse (*sic*). » Ces peaux de volaille et ces raisins correspondent parfaitement avec ce que les accusés rapportèrent au sujet du souper. Il est certain que ce qu'il prit pour du bœuf était de la chair de pigeon. Le fait même que « ces aliments n'avaient pu être entièrement broyés, divisés et atténués » s'accorde encore avec le dire des accusés. Confrontés avec lui, ils auraient pu le lui faire remarquer et sans doute il en serait convenu, car il ne se montra nullement hostile. Il en est de même de son opinion sur le moment où *le cadavre avait mangé* ; ce devait être, selon lui, plusieurs heures auparavant, parce que la digestion était *quasi-faite*, au lieu que Marc-Antoine avait soupé à sept heures et demie et avait dû se tuer assez peu de temps après.

Du reste, on se plaignit avec raison de ce qu'un examen si délicat et si important avait été confié à un chirurgien et non à un docteur en médecine. On sait qu'a-

1. Pièces justif. IV. Le rapport de Lamarque, qui fit seul l'autopsie, est un curieux exemple d'ignorance pédantesque.

lors les chirurgiens, surtout dans le Midi, n'étaient souvent que des barbiers à peine élevés par quelques études au-dessus de leur classe et méritaient encore en grande partie les reproches et les railleries dont, à Paris, Guy Patin les avait accablés au siècle précédent. M<sup>e</sup> Lamarque fut très-choqué de ce qu'on le croyait insuffisant ; mais le ton et le style de ses réclamations<sup>1</sup> nous semblent plutôt affaiblir sa déclaration que la confirmer.

Il est très-remarquable du reste, au sujet de ce souper, que l'on n'ait jamais pu faire varier les accusés, ni sur les mets servis, ni sur les places qu'ils occupaient à table. Les accusateurs prétendaient que ce souper n'avait pas eu lieu, et ce n'était pas sans raison ; il serait peu croyable, quoi qu'en ait dit l'Hebdomadier de Saint-Étienne, que cinq personnes en eussent étranglé une sixième, et eussent soupé ensemble aussitôt après.

On était fort embarrassé de la présence de Lavaysse à ce repas, de l'invitation qu'il disait en avoir reçue, de son retour volontaire sur le théâtre du crime et enfin de l'insistance qu'il avait mise à rentrer dans la maison. Toutes ces circonstances s'accordaient mal avec la culpabilité d'un jeune homme de vingt ans, arrivé de la veille, qui n'avait aucun intérêt quelconque à empêcher l'abjuration de son ami, et aucun motif de le tuer.

Il est évident que, ne trouvant aucune charge contre lui, on aurait dû l'absoudre et relâcher également cette servante qu'il était trop absurde de représenter aidant à étrangler son jeune maître, pour l'empêcher de faire ce qu'elle lui aurait conseillé de toutes ses forces. Mais si l'on avait absous Lavaysse et Viguière, on n'eût pas pu leur refuser le droit de redire, en qualité de té-

1. Voir *Bibliographie*, n° 29.

moins, qu'ils n'avaient pas quitté un instant les Calas, lui à table avec eux, elle servant le souper, venant sans cesse d'une cuisine attenante dont la porte était restée ouverte; et les Calas se seraient trouvés innocents<sup>1</sup>.

Il n'est pas de ruse qu'on n'ait employée à l'égard de Lavaysse. Il raconte lui-même une perfidie de David à son égard pendant une des confrontations.

*« Se penchant sur moi, il me dit à l'oreille que si j'avais quelque lettre ou billet à faire tenir à mes parents, il se ferait un plaisir de s'en charger. »* Le confiant jeune homme lui en remit plusieurs qui n'arrivèrent jamais à leur destination. Quand Lavaysse le sut, il s'étonna beaucoup que David, qui retenait ses lettres à ses parents, persistât à croire au crime des Calas, malgré les démonstrations de leur innocence qu'il avait dû y trouver<sup>2</sup>.

Une fois seulement on lui avait permis de voir sa famille en présence d'un Capitoul. On imagina un autre moyen d'en finir. On persuada à son père que les Calas étaient coupables, qu'on en avait des preuves tout à fait suffisantes, et on lui permit de voir son fils en présence de M. de Senaux, président à mortier. David Lavaysse déclara à son fils que les Calas étaient perdus, qu'il se perdait avec eux en niant leur crime, et le supplia de se sauver de la torture et de la mort en avouant qu'ils avaient étranglé Marc-Antoine. Nous aimons à croire qu'en tout ceci le père était sincère et véritablement trompé. Le fils lui répéta avec une imperturbable franchise ce qu'il avait toujours dit.

Si ce jeune homme ou Viguière eussent un seul

1. « Que n'aurait pas à craindre l'innocence la plus pure, demande à bon droit le conseiller La Salle, si l'accusateur pouvait, en impliquant dans l'accusation les témoins qui auraient pu déposer en faveur de l'accusé, rendre une justification impossible? »

2. Lav., 3. — E. de B., 3.

instant menti, par peur de la torture ou du supplice, les trois Calas périssaient et leur nom restait à jamais flétri.

Le moment approchait où les Capitouls allaient prononcer leur sanguinaire sentence. Jean Calas aurait eu le droit de récuser trois de ses juges, dit-on, mais très-certainement deux d'entre eux au moins, David et Chirac, pour avoir pris parti, avant tout jugement, en faisant enterrer comme un catholique celui que la défense disait protestant, comme un martyr celui en qui elle montrait un suicidé. Il est hors de doute qu'ils auraient dû se récuser eux-mêmes. Comme ils n'en faisaient rien, on dressa une *Requête* pour les y obliger, mais cette requête ne put être présentée, et cela par deux raisons péremptoires qui montrent à quelle situation en étaient réduits les accusés. La première fut qu'aucun huissier ne consentit à s'en charger, tant le châtiment de leur collègue Duroux avait produit l'effet d'intimidation qu'on s'en était promis. Le second obstacle ne fut pas moins invincible ; pareille requête exigeait, pour qu'on pût la présenter, *un pouvoir spécial* de la part des accusés au nom desquels elle était formulée ; il fut impossible de pénétrer jusqu'à eux et de les consulter.

Si l'on demande, en voyant la défense ainsi paralysée, en quoi consistait l'office des avocats, il ne sera que trop facile de répondre : à publier des consultations et des mémoires. Il est incontestable que depuis son entrevue, le lendemain de son arrestation, avec M<sup>e</sup> Carrière, plutôt encore comme ami que comme conseil, et depuis la lettre de ce même avocat envoyée par Louis, Calas ne put communiquer avec personne, ne vit aucun avocat et en particulier n'eut aucun rapport avec M<sup>e</sup> Sudre, que ses enfants chargèrent de la défense.

Il est vrai qu'un assesseur des Capitouls, ce même M<sup>e</sup> Monyer que Lavaysse alla chercher le 13 octobre et amena sur les lieux, fut nommé plus tard rapporteur de

l'affaire, eut pitié des Calas, fit valoir dans l'occasion quelques-uns des arguments qu'il y avait à donner en leur faveur, et résista, selon ses forces, à tout ce déchainement de passion et d'illégalité auquel il était forcé d'assister. Mais cette conduite humaine et loyale lui acquit la défaveur de ses redoutables collègues et une hante impopularité. Un frère Joseph Fabre prétendit que tous les soirs le jeune homme nommé Espaillac se rendait à dix heures avec Louis chez M<sup>e</sup> Monyer, et que le lendemain matin tous deux allaient rapporter aux demoiselles Calas ce qu'ils avaient appris chez l'assesseur. Ce dernier porta plainte contre ces accusations calomnieuses. Cependant, sur les conclusions du Procureur général, il fut ajourné à comparaître en personne devant le Parlement pour rendre compte de sa conduite. Un magistrat supérieur arrangea l'affaire. L'accusateur de Monyer lui fit des excuses, et l'assesseur « par honneur pour lui-même » continua ses fonctions de rapporteur à la séance suivante. Puis il crut devoir « se départir du rapport et même du jugement. » Plus tard un arrêt en forme constata la fausseté de l'imputation<sup>1</sup>.

Les fonctions très-importantes de rapporteur du procès furent dévolues alors à un autre assesseur, Carbonnel, et il est très-remarquable que ce magistrat qui, ainsi que son prédécesseur, était mieux en état, par ses fonctions mêmes, d'approfondir l'affaire que tous les autres juges, fut comme lui convaincu de l'innocence des Calas.

Ce fut pourtant un malheur pour eux de perdre M<sup>e</sup> Monyer, non quant à la procédure elle-même, mais parce que le système d'intimidation dont Duroux avait été la première victime, continuait à se développer. En même temps qu'on excitait l'enthousiasme du peuple

1. 30 août 1762. J'ai vu cet arrêt, ainsi que les trois autres prononcés contre Duroux, aux Archives du Parlement de Toulouse.

pour le prétendu martyr, on sévissait contre tous ceux qui s'intéressaient à ses parents ou entravaient le moins du monde la marche triomphale de l'accusation. Il nous reste à en citer un nouvel exemple. Ce même Espailiac et ce frère Joseph Fabre, que nous venons de nommer, nous le fourniront.

Claude Espailiac était garçon perruquier chez Durand. Le frère Joseph appartenait à une communauté de Frères-Tailleurs. Il déclara, ainsi que les frères Cailar et Barthélemy Pradet, ce qui suit. Espailiac étant occupé à raser les frères, un matin, frère Joseph lui demanda si lui, proche voisin des Calas, ne savait rien de cette affaire dont toute la ville parlait. Le jeune barbier ne résista pas à la tentation de se donner de l'importance devant ses pratiques et prétendit avoir entendu une voix, qu'il avait reconnue pour celle de Marc-Antoine Calas, crier : *Ah ! mon Dieu ! on m'étrangle ! — Ah ! mon Dieu ! on m'assassine !* Selon frère Barthélemy, Espailiac aurait dit, de plus, que cette même voix avait crié : *Ah ! mon père, vous m'étranglez !*

Il va sans dire que ce propos arriva à la justice. Espailiac fut appelé en témoignage. Tout ce qu'il déclara c'est qu'à dix heures il avait vu de la lumière dans la boutique des Calas, avait entendu pleurer et frapper du pied et qu'à ce moment il vit sortir Lavaysse.

Frère Joseph voulut être sûr qu'Espailiac avait répété devant la justice tout ce qu'il avait dit chez les Frères ; il le pressa de questions, et l'étourdi lui répondit « qu'il n'en avait pas dit la moitié. » Deux fois depuis, frère Joseph l'engagea devant trois membres de sa société, à aller révéler cette autre moitié de son récit ; il s'y refusa obstinément<sup>1</sup>.

Qui ne comprend que le garçon perruquier avait fait un conte aux trois frères-tailleurs, et qu'il recula de-

1. C'est d'après le texte même des quatre dépositions que nous rapportons ces faits.

vant l'infamie de persister dans ce conte en présence d'un juge d'instruction, après avoir prêté serment, et quand il y allait de la vie de cinq personnes innocentes ? Quoi de plus simple, de plus vulgaire qu'un tel fait ? On aima mieux supposer qu'Espailiac était un témoin infidèle, qui refusait de dire ce qu'il savait. Il fut décrété de prise de corps le 5 novembre ; l'alerte barbier avait prévu où aboutiraient les charitables sermons de frère Joseph et ne se laissa pas prendre. Il disparut et ne revint plus, mais le décret subsista ; cet incident eut sa large place dans les conversations des Toulousains, et tout le monde sut à quoi l'on s'exposait en rétractant un propos hostile aux Calas<sup>1</sup>. L'intimidation, on le voit, était au comble.

Tant que les Capitouls restèrent saisis du procès, il ne parut aucun Mémoire d'avocat en faveur des accusés. Il est probable que ce n'était pas l'usage devant cette juridiction inférieure à laquelle aucun ordre d'avocats n'était attaché. Il ne parut en faveur des Calas que les quatre ou cinq pages de la *Déclaration* de Louis. Cependant David Lavaysse, sans perdre de temps, avait tenté de sauver son fils. Il écrivit un Mémoire secret, qui est encore inédit et qu'il envoya au comte de Saint-Florentin. Il en fit passer une copie au comte de Rochechouart, son ami, envoyé de France auprès du duc de Parme, et probablement à d'autres personnes. Ce travail a dû être fait immédiatement, en octobre et novembre, puisque M. de Rochechouart, dans une lettre du 5 décembre, écrite au Ministre pour lui recommander le jeune Lavaysse et les Calas, s'appuie sur ce Mémoire qu'il venait de lire et y renvoie Saint-Florentin. Nous avons trouvé ce manuscrit aux Archives, à Paris

1. Il a suffi qu'Espailiac eût refusé de faire, d'un conte en l'air débité à ses pratiques, une dénonciation meurtrière et parjure, pour qu'on ait vu en lui un partisan des Calas et qu'on lui ait prêté, comme nous l'avons dit, un rôle dans de prétendus conciliabules avec Monyer et Louis.



(section historique, l. c.). Comme cette pièce est tout à fait inconnue, nous en donnerons un extrait.

Nous retrouvons dans ce document, qui date des premières semaines du procès, des circonstances qu'on accuse<sup>1</sup> Voltaire d'avoir inventées l'année suivante. Marc-Antoine y est appelé *un garçon très-mélancolique, et, ce jour-là, encore plus rêveur que de coutume*. L'écrivain décrit bien l'exaltation de la foule et les doutes d'un petit nombre d'hommes de sang-froid :

Le lendemain, le peuple saisit cette imposture avec avidité; plus on eut de zèle pour sa religion, moins on eut de doute sur le crime, sur les auteurs et sur le motif. On crut par piété que le fanatisme avait commis un forfait inouï jusqu'à ce jour. Il n'y eut que quelques sages qui gémirent de l'erreur où la ville étoit jetée par ses magistrats. Ils jugèrent qu'il y avoit impossibilité morale que cinq monstres, qu'on auroit peine à trouver dans un royaume, se fussent trouvés rassemblés dans une seule maison, qu'un père, une mère, un frère, un ami, une servante catholique, se fussent réunis à tremper leurs mains dans le sang d'un fils, d'un frère, d'un ami, d'un maître, et eussent soupé tranquillement après une pareille énormité.

David Lavaysse montra l'absurdité qu'il y avoit à accuser cinq personnes de choisir pour un assassinat prémédité une boutique de la rue la plus commerçante et la plus peuplée de la ville et le moment de la journée où cette rue étoit pleine de monde.

Il insiste sur l'intérêt qu'avaient les Capitouls, une fois l'affaire entamée comme elle l'étoit, à faire condamner les cinq prévenus qui pouvaient, s'ils étoient absous, les *prendre à partie*, c'est-à-dire les poursuivre eux-mêmes pour abus de pouvoir, emprisonnement sans décret, illégalité, etc.

Tous ces arguments si justes n'eurent aucun effet. Le 10 novembre, Lagane, le procureur du Roi, requit une sentence cruelle; nous reproduisons ses propres paroles :

1. Voir M. Huc, *Le Procès des Calas*.

« .... Requierit que, jugeant définitivement, vu ce qui résulte des charges, des verbaux et interrogatoires, et des aveux consignés en iceux ; rejetant les qualifications, et sans avoir égard aux reproches proposés par la dame Calas mère contre la dame Durand et le sieur Durand son fils, Jean Calas père, Jean-Pierre Calas et Anne-Rose Cabibel soient condamnés à être pendus jusqu'à ce que mort naturelle s'ensuive, ensuite leurs corps brûlés sur un bûcher à ce préparé et les cendres jetées au vent ; ce faisant, que leurs biens soient déclarés confisqués à qui de droit, le tiers réservé en la forme ordinaire ; et qu'à cet effet le scellé soit apposé sur tous les effets et marchandises des condamnés ; et quant à Alexandre-Gaubert Lavaysse et Jeanne Viguière, requiert qu'ils soient condamnés à assister à l'exécution ; de plus ledit Lavaysse condamné aux galères perpétuelles, avec défense d'en sortir sous peine de la vie ; et ladite Viguière à être renfermée pendant cinq ans dans le quartier de force de l'hôpital de la Grave en cette ville. »

Voici le texte de la délibération des Capitouls, en date du 18 novembre, d'après l'acte conservé aux Archives de l'État.

Par Devant Messieurs Roques de Rechon, avocat Capitoul, David de Beaudrigue, Chirac, Boyer, Capitouls, Ferlup, Labat et Carbonnel assesseurs,

M<sup>r</sup> Carbonnel, assesseur, Rapporteur, ayant fait le Rapport sur le Bureau et la Procédure faite D'autorité des Capitouls à la Requette du Procureur du Roy, Pour Crime de Parricide, Contre Calas Pere et fils Cadet, l'épouze du dit Calas, le S<sup>r</sup> Gaubert Lavaysse et Jeanne Viguière, servante dudit Calas, accusés, a Eté D'avis de Relaxer les dits accusés, et de faire le Procès à la mémoire du Cadavre de Marc Antoine Calas, Dépens Compensés.

M. Labat assesseur a Eté Davis au Contraire, vû ce qu'il Resulte de l'entierre Procédure, Prenant Droit D'icelle, et des aveux Consignés dans les Interrogatoires des accusés, Rejettant Les qualifications, sans avoir Egard aux objets et Reproches Proposés par la dite Calas mere Contre la Demoiselle Durand, et son fils abbe, temoins, et les rejettant, Condamner Les dit Calas Pere et fils Cadet, Et l'épouze du dit Calas Pere a Etre Pendus, et ensuite leur Corps Brullés Et Condemner aussi Lavaysse aux galleres Perpétuelles et de mettre La dite Viguière Servante hors Cours et de Procès, de Condamner Les dits Calas Pere et fils Cadet, Demoiselle Calas mere et Lavaysse aux dépens, ceux entre Le dit Procureur du Roy de (sic) La dite Viguière Demeurant Compensés.

M<sup>r</sup> Ferlup assesseur a Eté D'avis au Contraire qu'avant Dire

Droit Deffinitivement aux Parties, Ledit Calas Pere Sera appliqué a la question ordinaire Et Extraordinaire, et Surcis au Jugement des autres accusés, jusqu'après Le Rapport fait du verbal de torture, Depens Reserves.

M. Boyer Capitoul a Eté Davis au Contraire Dappliquer a la question ordinaire et extraordinaire le dit Calas Pere, et fils Cadet, et la Demoiselle Calas mere, et que le dit Lavaisse et Janne Viguiere Seront Presentes à La dite question, Depens Reservés.

M. Chirac Capitoul a Eté du même avis de M. Boyer.

M. David Capitoul, a Eté Davis au Contraire et (sic) de celui de M<sup>e</sup> Labat assesseur, a la difference seulement qu'il a Eté Davis au contraire de Condamner la dite Jeanne viguiere Servante, a cinq ans D'hospital.

M. Roques de Rechon Capitoul a Eté Davis au Contraire de Condamner les Cinq accusés a la question ordinaire et Extraordinaire.

Et M. Roques de Rechon Président du Burreau Etant Revenu sur les avis,

M. Carbonnel assesseur Rapporteur a persisté.

M. Labat sest Rangé de Lavis de M. Boyer Capitoul <sup>1</sup>, de meme que M. Forlup assesseur, et M. David Capitoul Et M. Roques, auquel avis au nombre de six la Sentence a tenû et Passé : ainsy le Certifie le greffier Criminel Soussigné Michel DieuLaFoy greffier, ainssy Signé a Loriginal, Collationné, Michel DieuLaFoy greff. Signé.

Collationné

BARRAU

gref.

Par cet arrêt, la torture la plus rigoureuse (question ordinaire et extraordinaire) fut prononcée contre Calas, Mme Calas et leur fils Pierre, et il fut décidé que Lavaysse et Viguière seraient présentés à la question sans y être appliqués. Dépens réservés.

C'est-à-dire que les Capitouls, ne parvenant pas à s'entendre sur la peine, crurent obtenir par la torture les aveux et les preuves qu'ils avaient cherchés en vain,

1. M. le chanoine Salvan nous apprend dans son livre (Voir *Bibl.* n° 89, pag. 3), que *M. Boyer, Capitoul, dont l'avis prévalut dans l'affaire Calas*, était son grand-oncle maternel, et père de M. Boyer, mort président à la Cour de Cassation et pair de France.

et n'hésitèrent pas à y soumettre à la fois trois membres de la même famille, parmi lesquels se trouvaient un vieillard et une femme irréprochable, déjà d'un certain âge et mère de six enfants.

On a prétendu<sup>1</sup> que, pour sortir d'embarras, les Capitouls donnèrent à dessein ce qu'on appelait une sentence *baroque*, c'est-à-dire illégale. En effet, ils avaient outrepassé leurs droits, non pas en envoyant à la torture père, mère et fils, mais en prononçant que les deux autres accusés y seraient seulement *présentés*. Cette présentation consistait à effrayer les accusés pour leur arracher des aveux; on les attachait sur l'instrument de la question, et après tous les préparatifs d'usage on les interrogeait; mais, au dernier moment, on les déliait sans les faire souffrir physiquement. L'Ordonnance défendait expressément à tous juges, hors les cours souveraines, de permettre cet adoucissement; un tribunal de première instance ne pouvait torturer qu'en réalité et jusqu'au bout, ou devait se priver de ce moyen d'enquête. On a dit que les juges avaient inséré à dessein cette clause pour faire casser leur sentence et renvoyer les accusés devant de plus hautes autorités; nous sommes convaincus que c'est là un faux bruit: tout ce qu'a de *baroque* l'arrêt du 18 novembre doit, selon nous, être imputé à l'ignorance et à l'esprit d'empiètement que nous trouvons à chaque pas chez ces étranges magistrats. Plût au ciel qu'ils ne se fussent jamais arrogé de droits plus exorbitants que celui de ne mettre les gens à la question que pour la forme<sup>2</sup>!

1. Lettre de Couder. Voir *Bibliographie*, n° 22.

2. En rendant compte dans la *Gazette des Tribunaux* le 2 janvier 1859, de la première édition de cet ouvrage, M. Duverdy faisait sur la sentence des Capitouls une remarque qui mérite d'être conservée :

« En lisant la sentence, nous avons été frappé de voir que le rapporteur avait été d'avis de l'acquiescement et qu'il avait persisté dans cet avis contre tous ses collègues qui voulaient infliger la question aux accusés. Dans l'ancienne procédure criminelle, suivant l'ordonnance de

L'arrêt fut communiqué le même jour aux accusés. Ils en appelèrent au Parlement. Le Procureur du Roi Lagane en appela devant la même cour, à *minimá*, c'est-à-dire comme d'une sentence trop indulgente.

« Au surplus, il a requis que l'extrait de la procédure, de la sentence et du *dictum*, ensemble les cinq accusés, fussent envoyés au Palais; et pour pourvoir à la sûreté desdits accusés à laquelle il est très-important de veiller, ledit sieur Procureur du Roy a procuré qu'ils ayent été mis aux fers et a signé. — Au parquet de la ville.

« LAGANE, Procureur du Roy. »

Le 18 novembre 1761.

Les condamnés furent aussitôt transférés de la prison de l'Hôtel-de-Ville à celle du Palais, et là on leur mit les fers aux pieds, petite torture en attendant la grande, mais humiliante et douloureuse, surtout à la longue. Jean Calas ne quitta les fers que le 10 mars pour être mis à la question et roué. Les autres les gardèrent quelques jours de plus, quatre mois environ. Ce fut en vain que David Lavaysse tenta de soustraire son fils à cette gêne; ce fut en vain qu'il offrit de payer autant de soldats qu'on voudrait pour le garder à vue, ce qui mettait à néant le prétendu motif de sûreté. Lagane fut inflexible. Il voulait des aveux et croyait les obtenir par la rigueur.

Ce fut le 5 décembre que le Parlement de Toulouse jugea l'appel, par un arrêt dit *interlocutoire*, cassa celui

1670, les témoins ne comparaissaient pas à l'audience. Ils étaient interrogés en secret par le rapporteur seul qui faisait dresser par son greffier procès-verbal des interrogatoires. Les juges ne prononçaient donc que sur la procédure écrite. Or, il y a à remarquer que le seul des juges qui eût vu les accusés et les témoins, celui qui avait pu dans ce contact former ses impressions en observant la physionomie, l'accent tant des uns que des autres, celui dont la conviction reposait sur quelque chose de plus que la procédure écrite, celui-là fut d'avis de l'acquittement et y persista. Il avait opiné le premier, de sorte que l'on peut dire que le premier mot de la justice dans l'affaire Calas fut pour l'innocence des accusés, de même que le dernier mot de la justice proclama encore cette innocence par l'arrêt de réhabilitation dont nous parlerons plus bas. »

des Capitouls, leur fit « défense de, à l'avenir, ordonner « que les prévenus seront seulement présentés à la torture sans y être appliqués, » retint la cause quant au fond et maintint le commencement d'information comme valable. Le conseiller Pierre-Étienne de Boissy fut délégué *pour continuer l'inquisition commencée*<sup>1</sup>.

Élie de Beaumont fit remarquer plus tard<sup>2</sup> qu'en tout ceci le Parlement, à son tour, agit avec une précipitation extrême.

On mit sur le bureau, dès le 5 décembre, le procès à juger pour le fond, lorsqu'il n'y avait pas même assez de juges de Tournelle à Toulouse, pour faire arrêt, et lorsque l'appel même du Monitoire était pendant à la Grand'Chambre. On fut obligé d'aller au bureau de la Grand'Chambre, où se trouva seul (n'y ayant alors aucun travail) un conseiller, qu'on amena à la Tournelle et qui n'opina certainement pas pour les accusés.

Ainsi qu'on vient de le voir, les prévenus avaient interjeté appel comme d'abus contre le Monitoire. Nous avons prouvé que cet acte scandaleux était rempli d'illégalités et de nullités évidentes; on a pu lire ici même quelques textes de loi d'une précision irréfragable à cet égard. Mais ce fut alors que parut dans tout son jour l'abandon où se trouvaient les Calas, et la crainte qu'on avait d'attaquer, dans le Monitoire, l'œuvre commune de la magistrature et de l'Église, l'objet de la confiance sans réserve de toute la ville. Personne n'osa soutenir l'appel<sup>3</sup> et la Grand'Chambre rendit un nouvel arrêt portant

1. Voici quelle était la valeur exacte de cette formule, d'après une lettre d'Amblard à Saint-Priest : « Le *plus amplement acquis* suppose qu'il n'y a pas de preuves, au lieu que *l'inquisition commencée ou continuée* ne suppose pas l'insuffisance absolue de preuves pour condamner. Tout cela paraît un jeu de mots; mais c'est le *style* de ce parlement. » (Salvan, p. 102.)

2. E. de B., 3.

3. En présence d'un pareil fait, il est au moins étrange d'entendre les modernes adversaires des Calas prétendre, sans aucune preuve, comme le continuateur de Dom Vayssette, que plus de deux cent soixante familles du commerce, les nombreux alliés de Mme Calas (tous bons gentilshommes), beaucoup de membres du Parlement et de famille

« qu'il n'y a abus dans l'obtention dudit Monitoire. » Enfin, un troisième arrêt ordonna la quatrième publication de ce même Monitoire pour le 13 décembre, comme nous avons dû le dire par anticipation ; la fulmination eut lieu le dimanche suivant. Seulement, pour couvrir l'illégalité patente qui résultait de ce que cette pièce émanait du Grand-Vicaire et non de l'Official, on y fit joindre la sanction de ce tribunal ; ce ne fut qu'une simple formalité, un hommage tardif à un pouvoir dont on avait eu le tort de se passer jusque-là.

nobles alliées à David Lavaysse s'intéressèrent très-activement pour Calas, pour sa femme, pour le jeune Gaubert. C'est le contraire de la vérité. Tout était dans la consternation, et à peine quelques intimes amis conseillaient les deux jeunes filles restées seules, et Louis Calas, le déserteur du toit paternel.



## CHAPITRE VII.

### LES CALAS DEVANT LE PARLEMENT.

Exercice de pouvoir de cette cour. — Mémoires de Sudre, de la Salle, de Gaubert et de David Lavaysse — Discussion des témoignages. — Les cris entendus le 13 octobre. — Maro-Antoine a-t-il pu se tuer ? — Est-il mort assassiné ? — Était-il devenu catholique ? — Témoignages sur oui-dire, ou absurdes, ou volontairement faux.

Je suis persuadé plus que jamais de l'innocence des Calas et de la cruelle bonne foi du Parlement de Toulouse.

VOLTAIRE.

(Au comte d'Argental, 21 juin 1762.)

Le Parlement de Toulouse s'était signalé maintes fois par sa violence et ses empiétements de pouvoir<sup>1</sup>.

A l'époque qui nous occupe il n'avait pas changé<sup>2</sup>. Ce

1. On peut lire dans la Vie de Dolet, par M. Joseph Boulmié (Paris, 1857, p. 30-34), le discours trop violent qu'il prononça en 1532 contre cette cour tracassière et despotique, qui ne voulait pas souffrir à Toulouse les associations d'étudiants, usitées alors en tous pays..... Il vient de déclarer que les Turcs sont moins intolérants ; puis il s'écrie : « Dans quel pays sommes-nous ? Chez quelles gens vivons-nous ? La grossièreté des Scythes, la monstrueuse barbarie des Gètes, ont-elles fait irruption dans cette ville, pour que les pestes humaines qui l'habitent, haïssent, persécutent et proscrivent ainsi la sainte pensée ? Ne reconnaissez-vous pas, à cette marque, la grossièreté manifeste, la méchanceté scandaleuse de ces gens-là ? »

2. Voir la note 15.



Ce Mémoire fut communiqué avant l'impression à M<sup>e</sup> Sudre, l'avocat des Calas; nous y avons partout reconnu une dignité calme, une raison ferme qui sont très-râres dans un *factum* du dix-huitième siècle. Il est évident qu'après avoir écrit et publié ce Mémoire anonyme, La Salle ne pouvait que se récuser. Nous avons blâmé David de Beaudrigue et Chirac d'avoir persisté à juger ce procès après avoir fait connaître leur opinion par une manifestation publique. Louons M. de La Salle d'avoir obéi à la loi dont il était le représentant, mais déplorons le malheur des Calas qui, après avoir perdu M<sup>e</sup> Monyer en première instance, perdirent La Salle en appel. Il semble que tout conspirât contre eux, même le bien qu'on avait voulu leur faire.

Je viens de nommer le premier avocat qui ait eu l'honneur de plaider la cause des Calas, et qui s'est créé par cet acte de courage, et par la manière dont il s'en acquitta, des titres impérissables à la reconnaissance et au respect<sup>1</sup>. Sudre, en prenant en main cette cause périlleuse, en la soutenant dans trois Mémoires successifs, n'avait pas, comme ses continuateurs Élie de Beaumont, Loyseau de Mauléon et Mariette, un Voltaire pour client et l'Europe pour auditoire. Sudre avait à lutter contre le Parlement, le Clergé et les pénitents blancs, contre un David de Beaudrigue et un Lagane, contre ceux qui avaient suspendu le procureur Duroux, cité devant leur justice l'assesseur Monyer et décrété

comblait *d'espérance et de joie* (*Lettres*, voir notre recueil, p. 152). Nous ne savons si ce voyage eut lieu. Dans la plupart des drames et des tragédies qu'on écrivit plus tard, La Salle, qui vivait encore, a toujours le rôle du *sage*, du moraliste, comme les Ariste de Molière ou le Cléante du *Tartuffe*, mais avec beaucoup moins de vrai bon sens, et beaucoup plus de déclamation. Dans le Calas de *Chénier*, le rôle de La Salle, comme le plus beau de tous, fut joué par Talma.

Dans ces drames, La Salle et David sont opposés l'un à l'autre comme la sagesse bienveillante à la tyrannie la plus insensée et la plus criminelle.

1. Voir sur M<sup>e</sup> Sudre la note 16 à la fin du vol.

de prise de corps le témoin Espailac. Le peuple de Toulouse, les dévots, les couvents, la magistrature, si puissante alors dans une ville parlementaire, il fallait tout braver de front. Sudre l'osa, mais il paya chèrement son courage ; plusieurs années se passèrent sans qu'il se trouvât d'assez hardis plaideurs pour confier leurs intérêts à un avocat aussi dangereusement compromis<sup>1</sup>, et lorsque plus tard son élection au Capitoulat échoua, ce fut parce que Toulouse ne put se résoudre à revêtir d'une autorité municipale celui qui avait osé se faire le défenseur des Calas.

La date précise des divers *Mémoires* publiés dans le procès serait souvent assez difficile à déterminer ; mais par quelques mots<sup>2</sup> du premier factum de Sudre, nous savons qu'il parut moins de trois mois après la mort de Marc-Antoine, dans les derniers jours de 1761 ou les premiers de l'année suivante ; en d'autres termes, dès que l'affaire eut été évoquée par le Parlement, Sudre s'en chargea. Coup sur coup, en deux mois, il publia trois écrits : 1° *Mémoire justificatif pour le sieur Jean Calas, négociant de cette ville, dame Anne-Rose Cabibel, son épouse, et le sieur Jean-Pierre Calas, un de leurs enfants* ; 2° *Suite pour les sieurs et demoiselle Calas* ; 3° *Réflexions pour les sieurs et demoiselle Calas*<sup>3</sup>. Ces Mémoires, les premiers qui parurent, sont, à notre avis, les meilleurs de tous ; fort au-dessus de ceux que Voltaire et l'Europe firent profession d'admirer plus tard<sup>4</sup>, ils sont à peu près exempts de l'enflure qui règne dans tous les autres ; seuls, les écrits de Voltaire lui-même nous paraissent supérieurs, et celui de La Salle égal aux travaux de M<sup>e</sup> Sudre. La science du droit, l'érudition clas-

1. Voltaire à Argental, 10 décembre 1767. — Le fait est confirmé par d'autres renseignements positifs.

2. Sudre, I, p. 4.

3. *Bibliographie*, n<sup>os</sup> 4, 6, 7.

4. « Moins habiles, moins éloquents que Sudre, et plus souvent emphatiques, » dit avec raison l'historien du Languedoc.

sique, s'y retrouvent à chaque pas, mais avec mesure et sans étalage. Le sens pratique, l'exposition simple et probante des faits, la force des raisonnements, s'y font d'autant plus sentir qu'on n'y retrouve point cette déclamation ampoulée, théâtrale, à grandes prétentions, qui était alors de mode à Paris. Il est à regretter que Voltaire n'ait pas connu ces Mémoires à temps pour en faire usage, et ne les ait pas fait réimprimer. Ils sont devenus rares.

A la même époque parut le premier Mémoire de Lavaysse, intitulé : *Mémoire du sieur Gaubert Lavaysse*<sup>1</sup>. Il ressemble aux précédents par sa simplicité, mais diffère des écrits de Sudre en ce qu'on n'y trouve aucune trace de science juridique ni d'habitudes littéraires. Il nous paraît probable que cette pièce eut réellement le prisonnier pour auteur, et fut revue par son père.

Ce dernier publia, quelque temps après, un écrit intitulé : *Mémoire de M<sup>e</sup> David Lavaysse, avocat en la Cour, pour le sieur François-Alexandre-Gaubert Lavaysse, son troisième fils*<sup>2</sup>. Il n'acheva pas ce travail. Au milieu d'une phrase à propos de la fréquence des suicides en Angleterre, il s'interrompt, et on lit en caractères italiques :

*« Qu'entends-je, juste ciel!... on juge mon fils : je n'ai pas la force de continuer... je succombe... Lavaysse, mon cher fils, arme-toi de courage. Achève la défense d'un frère innocent. — J'obéis à mon père, écrit aussitôt Etienne Lavaysse, le deuxième fils*<sup>3</sup>. Avec aussi peu d'expérience, le disciple remplira-t-il le plan formé par le maître ? Que je te plains, mon cher frère, d'avoir ta défense en des mains si faibles ! le zèle suppléera-t-il aux talents ? »

Et la phrase commencée sur les suicides anglais, est reprise.

1. *Bibliographie*, n° 9. — 2. *Ibid.*, n° 10.

3. Voir, dans la note 10 l'histoire touchante d'Etienne Lavaysse et de sa femme, petite-nièce de Bayle.

J'avoue que ce coup de théâtre ne me fait éprouver qu'une médiocre émotion. Il y a là une scène de drame bourgeois à la façon de Diderot, ou, si l'on veut, le sujet d'un tableau de famille pour Greuze. Mais ce n'est point ainsi que devrait parler la nature. Il est bien qu'un père, âgé de soixante-sept ans, se fasse aider par un fils, avocat comme lui, pour la défense d'un autre de ses enfants exposé au plus horrible danger. Mais est-ce ainsi qu'il faudrait le dire ? Cette manière de se pâmer devant le public, de donner en spectacle ses douleurs paternelles, et de succomber devant le lecteur en lettres italiques, me paraît d'assez mauvais goût. Sudre et La Salle avaient été bien plus pathétiques en cherchant beaucoup moins à l'être.

Ces divers Mémoires, avec plus ou moins de logique et d'éloquence, discutaient des questions que nous avons à dessein laissées de côté jusqu'à ce moment, parce qu'il aurait fallu y revenir ; l'*inquisition* commencée par les Capitouls ayant été acceptée par le Parlement, les mêmes dépositions figurent dans les deux procès.

Le premier point à établir semble être celui-ci : quels étaient les cris qu'on avait entendus dans la rue des Filatiers pendant la soirée du 13 ? Nous croyons avoir parfaitement prouvé que ces cris, entendus par quatorze témoins à neuf heures et demie, au plus tôt, ne pouvaient être ceux de Marc-Antoine puisque le chirurgien Gorsse, Delpuech, Brun, arrivés immédiatement après, le trouvèrent déjà froid, et les médecins chargés de l'examiner avec plus de précision, *un peu chaud* seulement. Il était donc mort depuis quelques heures, quand ces cris éclatèrent.

Il est bien certain que ces cris n'étaient pas les siens, mais ceux de Lavaysse et de Pierre, puis surtout ceux de Calas père et enfin de toute la famille. Si l'on se trouvait à Toulouse ou dans tout autre endroit du

Midi au moment d'un accident mortel, on entendrait aujourd'hui encore, non des sanglots et des pleurs, mais des cris aigus et déchirants. Les hommes du Nord, moins violents dans leurs démonstrations extérieures, s'en font difficilement une idée <sup>1</sup>.

S'il en est ainsi lorsque meurt un malade dont on attendait le dernier soupir, il n'est pas étonnant qu'un bruit affreux éclate dans une maison où l'on découvre le cadavre d'un parent que l'on croyait plein de vie. Tous les habitants du quartier entendirent ce bruit; mais ils distinguèrent mal; les paroles ne pouvaient arriver que confusément à leur oreille, du fond de cette boutique fermée, surtout quand plus d'une voix s'élevait à la fois.

Cazalus, garçon passementier, qui n'a entendu autre chose que *Ah! mon Dieu! ah! mon Dieu!* dans la boutique d'abord, puis dans le corridor, dit certainement toute la vérité. Quant à Popis, son camarade, qui croit avoir entendu *au voleur* et *à l'assassin*, il se trompe. Plusieurs autres personnes crurent entendre *au voleur*; évidemment celles-là entendirent mal; mais, en tout cas, ce n'est pas le cri d'un fils étranglé par ses propres parents.

N'est-il pas tout simple que des paroles que l'on crie du fond d'une maison fermée, ne soient entendues de la rue que d'une manière indistincte, et diversement interprétées par chacun?

1. En 1843, j'étais depuis quelques jours à Nîmes où je venais d'être appelé comme pasteur suffragant, lorsqu'on vint me prier de visiter un vieillard mourant dans la maison en face de celle que j'habitais. J'y courus à l'instant, mais déjà il était trop tard; en traversant la rue j'entendis un épouvantable tumulte. Le malade venait d'expirer, et à l'instant même, quatre ou cinq femmes se mirent à courir par la chambre en poussant les cris les plus aigus, mêlés d'exclamations de — *Ah! mon Dieu!* — *Ah! mon pauvre père!* — *Ah! mon pauvre mari!* J'étais tout stupéfait de cette scène nouvelle pour moi, que j'ai vue depuis se répéter bien des fois, même dans des cas de mort naturelle, lente et prévue. J'eus grand'peine à obtenir un peu de silence et de calme.

On a vu Espailac se donner devant trois frères-tailleurs un air important, en déclarant qu'il avait reconnu la voix de Marc-Antoine<sup>1</sup> se plaignant qu'on l'étranglait; les trois frères insistent sur l'importance de ces assertions qu'ils croient vraies, les répètent devant la justice et il se trouve qu'elles sont fausses, qu'Espailac ne dit rien de pareil et aime mieux fuir que les attester. Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner si divers témoins ont ouï dire que ces cris fabuleux avaient été entendus par d'autres. Déjà un des frères-tailleurs au lieu de : *Ah! mon Dieu! on m'étrangle*, faisait dire au mourant : *Ah! mon père, vous m'étranglez*. La demoiselle Pouchelon qui, disait-on, avait entendu crier : *On m'assassine*, l'a nié<sup>2</sup>. Tel autre prétend qu'on criait : *Pourquoi m'étranglez-vous?* ou encore : *Ah! mon Dieu! mon père, vous me faites tuer; vous n'avez pas pitié de moi*, ou encore : *Mon père, laissez-moi faire un acte de contrition*. On voit que ces prétendus cris d'un homme qu'on étrangle finissent par devenir des phrases entières, ou pathétiques ou édifiantes. Aussi toutes ces dernières versions sont-elles des ouï-dire et non des témoignages auriculaires; chacune de ces paroles est rapportée sur ouï-dire et toujours par un seul témoin; il n'en est pas une que deux personnes déclarent avoir entendue, excepté le cri : *Ah! mon Dieu!* évidemment le seul réel, mais qui ne prouve rien contre les Calas.

Une multitude de déclarations insignifiantes, et dont ceux même qui les faisaient ignoraient l'origine, furent apportées par divers témoins. Nous en citerons

1. Quand cette déposition n'eût pas été rétractée de fait, on pourrait encore remarquer que la voix de Pierre Calas, au moment où il trouva le cadavre et où sa mère accourut à ses cris, a pu être facilement confondue, du dehors, avec celle de Marc-Antoine, celui de ses frères dont l'âge approchait le plus du sien. Les plus grandes ressemblances de timbre, de prononciation, de ton sont très-communes entre frères.

2. Sudre, 1.

une qui est un modèle du genre, et qui est plus étrange que d'autres, uniquement en ce qu'elle a été déposée, par un homme sérieux, un prêtre, membre de la savante société de l'Oratoire, entre les mains d'un de ses propres collègues. On ne s'étonnera plus en lisant les vagues déclarations de personnages si graves, des inepties que venaient raconter au tribunal les commères du quartier.

Quelqu'un que je ne puis me rappeler m'a assuré tenir du per-ruquier (Durand), qui demeure dans la grande rue près de la maison du sieur Calas, que son garçon (Jean Pérès) étant sorti sur la rue avait entendu, ou à peu près, les cris et les plaintes rapportés dans le Monitoire, et je crois qu'il avait vu paraître à la porte dudit sieur Calas un jeune homme ayant l'épée à la main et regardant à droite et à gauche.

*Signé* : MICAULT DE SOULEVILLE, prêtre de l'Oratoire.

Je soussigné déclare avoir reçu la susdite déposition à Toulouse ce 3 novembre 1761.

*Signé* : EYSSAUTIER, prêtre de l'Oratoire.

Collationné, BARRAU, *greff.*

On aura remarqué le trait nouveau de *l'épée à la main* qui ne se trouve qu'ici. Nous avons entendu les voisins de Calas raconter qu'ils avaient vu sortir de la maison un *porte-épée*, c'est-à-dire, dans le langage populaire de la contrée, un gentilhomme ayant l'épée au côté; et, en effet, Lavaysse, comme tous les hommes d'une condition un peu relevée, la portait constamment. Il en avait le droit, étant d'une famille légalement anoblie. Mais voici que, de bouche en bouche, cette épée de toilette devient une épée nue; et elle figure, apparemment comme l'insigne de sa profession de bourreau, dans la main de ce jeune homme, qui cependant n'avait pu s'en servir pour étrangler le martyr.

Voilà la déposition du père de Souleville, d'un collègue des Massillon et des Malebranche.

Cette prétendue preuve, tirée des cris entendus dans la rue des Filatiers, ne serait pas encore réduite à toute s

nullité, si nous ne disions que la servante d'un voisin qui habitait de l'autre côté de la rue, affirmait qu'elle avait entendu crier : *On m'assassine !* M<sup>e</sup> Sudre répondit qu'il était impossible à cette distance d'entendre des paroles prononcées, même en criant, dans l'intérieur de la maison Calas, fermée comme elle l'était. Il supplia vainement qu'on en fît l'essai ; on ne daigna tenir aucun compte de sa demande.

Un autre fait qu'on allégua contre les accusés, c'est la prétendue impossibilité qu'il y avait à ce que Marc-Antoine se fût pendu à la bille de bois, ou billot, posé en travers de la porte. Il fallut bien reconnaître pourtant que ce billot avait été l'instrument de sa mort, car on le retrouva avec la corde à double nœud coulant, et même quelques cheveux du mort y étaient encore attachés. On prétendit alors que ce billot avait dû servir à lui tordre la corde autour du cou pour l'étrangler. Dans un des *briefs intendits* du procureur du roi, on prétendit établir que la victime avait été couchée ou assise sur deux chaises. Encore une de ces suppositions gratuites que Lagane donnait hardiment pour des réalités. Le contraire fut prouvé par la marque livide que la corde avait laissée sur le cou. Elle eût été à peu près horizontale, s'il y avait eu étranglement, comme on le disait. Au lieu de cela, en arrière des oreilles, elle remontait et se perdait dans les cheveux, comme il devait arriver chez un homme suspendu.

On soutint que la porte était trop basse. Il se trouva, vérification faite, qu'elle était bien plus haute qu'il n'était nécessaire. On prétendit alors qu'elle l'était trop, et que Marc-Antoine n'avait pu se pendre qu'en montant sur une chaise ou sur un escabeau ; et l'on opposa aux accusés qu'ils n'avaient point dit qu'il y eût près de là ni escabeau ni chaise. Calas répondit « que dans son trouble, il s'occupa peu d'examiner s'il y en avait



près de la porte ; que d'ailleurs il y en avait nombre, de l'un et de l'autre, dans la boutique et dans le magasin, et que Marc-Antoine avait dû le repousser du pied s'il s'en était servi. »

On imagina alors de dire que le billot étant placé sur les deux battants ouverts de la porte, le poids d'un homme les aurait ébranlés, ils se seraient rapprochés et la porte se serait refermée, de sorte que le billot serait tombé à terre ; on objecta aussi que, les deux battants étant un peu inclinés, le billot aurait roulé. On l'y replaça, il ne roula nullement, et ne le pouvait, parce qu'il était aplati par un bout. Bien plus, le 14 octobre, devant les soldats de garde, la maison étant ouverte, et quelques curieux y allant et venant, des jeunes gens replacèrent le billot sur les battants et se pendirent à la corde avec les mains ; les battants restèrent fermes, et treize longs bouts de ficelle jetés sur l'une des portes, d'où on les prenait quand on en avait besoin, ne furent pas dérangés, tant la porte demeurait immobile. Les soldats racontèrent que déjà ils avaient fait la même expérience, qui d'ailleurs se présentait d'elle-même à l'esprit<sup>1</sup>.

Il paraît que ces preuves ébranlèrent un instant la conviction de David. Il mena de nuit un homme que sa profession et le mépris public rendaient indigne de confiance, le bourreau, dans la maison de Calas, et lui demanda s'il était possible de se pendre ainsi. Cet odieux expert répondit que non, soit qu'il voulût complaire à ce puissant personnage qui daignait lui parler et le consulter comme une autorité, soit qu'il ne comprît rien à une pendaison qui n'était nullement conforme aux règles de son métier. Malgré cette sentence, David n'osa se prévaloir ouvertement d'un pareil témoignage, et

1. Tous ces détails sont très-bien racontés et discutés par Sudre (1, p. 45).

les avocats des Calas lui reprochèrent d'y avoir recouru.

Il reste incontestable que Marc-Antoine a pu monter sur un escabeau entre les deux battants ouverts de la porte, se passer autour du cou en la croisant, la corde, longue de deux pans (seize pouces), faire entrer le billot dans les deux nœuds coulants qui la terminaient, poser les deux bouts de ce billot à droite et à gauche sur les deux battants, puis écarter du pied l'escabeau. Sans doute il a fallu pour cela une résolution froide et très-arrêtée; mais combien de suicides en offrent des exemples beaucoup plus singuliers! Son habit, plié avec soin sur le comptoir, l'ordre parfait de ses vêtements et de sa chevelure mettent d'ailleurs hors de contestation ce calme affreux du parti pris.

On répond que cette corde qui, en effet, correspondait parfaitement à la raie livide du cou, ce billot où adhéraient quelques cheveux, ont pu être employés par ses parents à le tuer. Mais pourquoi auraient-ils pris ce moyen étrange, compliqué, inexplicable si ce sont cinq assassins qui tuent un seul homme<sup>1</sup>? Ce moyen est étrange même pour un suicide, mais s'explique, dans cette seule hypothèse, par la difficulté de se pendre soi-même, en un lieu où rien ne favorisait ce dessein, et par la complication des moyens qu'emploient souvent ceux qui se tuent, pour être sûrs de ne pas se manquer et de ne pas souffrir longtemps. Et l'on ne peut répondre que tout cela a été disposé pour faire croire à un suicide : en ce cas on eût trouvé l'escabeau renversé aux pieds du cadavre et les coupables n'auraient pas manqué de le faire remarquer. Pas un n'y songea, et quand l'idée en vint aux magistrats, tant de gens étaient allés dans la boutique et dans le magasin, et avec tant

1. Voir, dans la note 17, l'opinion du fameux chirurgien Louis et d'un autre médecin qui avait étudié les rapports de Lamarque et de ses collègues au point de vue de la science.

de trouble, qu'il fut impossible de dire si un meuble aussi insignifiant s'était trouvé là, renversé ou écarté par le pied du suicidé.

Si les Calas ont tué Marc-Antoine, il faudra croire qu'il y a consenti, non-seulement parce qu'on n'entendit aucun cri jusqu'au moment où on le trouva déjà refroidi, mais aussi parce que ni ses habits, ni ses cheveux, ni son corps, ni les leurs, ne laissaient apercevoir aucun désordre, rien qui indiquât la moindre lutte, le moindre effort. Ce dernier fait est très-digne de remarque. Pour peu qu'un homme se débatta contre ses meurtriers, il reçoit ou se fait à lui-même des contusions, des ecchymoses. On ne constata rien de pareil. Quand le corps eut été déposé à l'hôtel de ville, il se trouva une légère égratignure au nez, par suite de quelque inadvertance dans le transport; mais un grand nombre de témoins pouvaient attester qu'elle était survenue depuis la découverte du cadavre.

Dès qu'apparurent les premiers indices de corruption, très-prompts sous ce climat, on voulut en faire des preuves contre les accusés. Ici nous laisserons parler le chirurgien Lamarque, celui même qui concluait de l'autopsie que Marc-Antoine n'avait pas soupé; on retrouvera, dans le fait qu'il raconte, toute l'obstination des Capitouls :

Le même jour je fus appelé vers les onze heures à la maison de Ville, où MM. Faget, chef du Consistoire, et David, Capitoul, me dirent en propres termes : Comment ! Monsieur, vous ne vous êtes pas aperçu que le cadavre avait des meurtrissures sur le corps ? On nous a dit qu'il en était tout plein et cependant vous n'en faites pas mention dans votre Relation. — Je répondis que nous n'en avions point trouvé. Je me transportai de suite à la chambre de torture où on avait transporté Calas; je l'examine, je reviens au Consistoire et je rapporte à ces messieurs que ce qu'on voyait actuellement sur le corps de Calas n'étaient pas des meurtrissures, qu'à la vérité le cadavre avait actuellement en partie les épaules, les jambes, etc., de couleur violette, mais que cela ne venait que de la situation du cadavre<sup>1</sup>.

1. Lettre de Lamarque (*Bibliographie*, n° 30).

Après cette première tentative, si complètement avortée, il y en eut d'autres. Les témoins Pagès et Lambri-got, ce dernier, soldat de garde<sup>1</sup>, (l'éternelle ressource de l'accusation), vinrent encore affirmer qu'ils avaient vu sur le cadavre une tache noire. Il est vrai qu'interrogés à part, le soldat dit qu'elle était grande comme une pièce de vingt-quatre sous; Pagès, comme la main. On fit venir cette fois un autre chirurgien nommé Faure (chirurgien *facultiste*), qui expliqua la marque noire « par l'application du cadavre sur une planche raboteuse en cet endroit<sup>2</sup>. » Ce témoignage réduisit à rien les deux autres.

Ces exemples montrent ce que valent quelques-unes des dépositions entendues. Il est facile de comprendre que, toute une ville s'entretenant de cette affaire avec passion depuis le 13 octobre jusqu'au milieu de mars, une foule de commérages tout-à-fait vagues finirent par devenir des récits très-circonstanciés, qui gagnaient de bouche en bouche ce qui leur avait manqué d'abord.

Il était rarement possible de remonter à la source de ces bruits; il se trouvait presque toujours, soit en dernière analyse, soit à un point quelconque de la chaîne, une ou deux apparitions de ce pronom impersonnel *on*, aussi commode à citer qu'impossible à convaincre de mensonge. Quelquefois cependant, l'instruction remonte jusqu'à l'origine de la rumeur, et découvre qu'elle n'est rien. Ainsi, Catherine Amblard, femme Audouy, déclare « ne rien savoir et n'avoir pas dit ce qu'on lui a fait dire<sup>3</sup>. » Ainsi réclamèrent la demoiselle Pouchelon et sa servante, qui demeuraient vis-à-vis des Calas<sup>4</sup>. Ainsi, à en croire un témoin, le nommé Bruyère a raconté que le 12 octobre, Marc-Antoine vint lui dire : « Tu n'auras plus de peine à me fréquenter, parce que je

1. Lettre de Lamarque, *Bibliographie*, n° 30.

2. Arch. Imp. — 3. Arch. Imp. — 4. Sudre, 2.

me fais catholique ; je dois faire demain ma première communion. » On appelle Bruyère en témoignage. Il dit seulement que *quelques personnes lui avaient dit qu'il courait un bruit sourd* que Marc-Antoine Calas devait changer de religion. Ces paroles de Marc-Antoine étaient donc controuvées.

Ainsi enfin trois femmes de procureurs<sup>1</sup> racontent, en grand détail, une conversation où un M. G.-A. Roux, droguiste, assis avec elles dans le *courroir* de la maison d'une d'entre elles, leur avait appris que Marc-Antoine était catholique, qu'il devait abjurer dans deux ou trois jours, qu'il allait tous les matins à la messe dans des églises éloignées de la demeure de ses parents, et que lui, Roux, était allé avec Marc-Antoine entendre une messe le matin même de sa mort. Que, du reste, il le connaissait si soumis à son père et à sa mère, que si l'un ou l'autre avait voulu lui couper la tête, il l'aurait présentée sans résistance. Ces trois dépositions qui s'accordent, paraissent accablantes. Heureusement, on fait venir le sieur Roux, qui nie le tout et déclare n'avoir eu aucun rapport avec Marc-Antoine Calas depuis environ trois ans. « Que s'il a parlé sur la mort et sur plusieurs circonstances qui pouvaient regarder M.-A. Calas, il n'en parlait que sur le bruit public, et sans savoir d'où il le tenait. »

Ainsi enfin, deux autres femmes (soixante-sixième et soixante-septième témoins) déposent qu'un étranger se faisant raser un jour chez le sieur Saint-Martin, chirurgien, raconta en ces termes l'exécution de Calas aîné :

« Il y avait là un clou ; on y attacha une corde pour lui faire peur ; on lui dit par deux fois : *Veux-tu te rendre ?* et ledit Calas décédé ayant dit non, on l'exécuta. »

Voilà un martyr bien caractérisé, avec toutes ses cir-

1. Les demoiselles Mercadier, de Pruet et de Gottis. (Arch. Imp.

constances. On mande cet étranger (Simon Saladin, soixante-huitième témoin). Il dépose :

Qu'à l'égard de ce qu'il a dit chez le sieur Saint-Martin, chirurgien, en se faisant raser, ce n'était qu'un raisonnement qu'il fit en l'air, de son propre mouvement. (*Arch. Imp.*)

Nous ne poursuivrons pas plus longtemps ce catalogue d'assertions en l'air, démenties par ceux mêmes qui les ont prononcées. Il nous suffira de renvoyer à Élie de Beaumont qui a dressé<sup>1</sup> une liste de quinze témoins démentis par d'autres. Souvent, comme dans ce dernier cas, il y a eu bavardage plutôt que mauvais vouloir, mais il n'en est pas toujours ainsi. Un témoin commence par déclarer qu'il ne peut pas souffrir les protestants<sup>2</sup>. La nommée Gastonne raconte dans sa déposition<sup>3</sup> un dialogue de voisines au moment où le bruit d'un crime attirait tout le quartier dans la rue. « On a battu Calas, dit l'une. — Il n'en est pas mort, répond une autre. — Tant pis ! » dit une troisième.

Cette haine contre des protestants inoffensifs se traduisit par une multitude de calomnies plus affreuses les unes que les autres, mais toutes sans aucune solidité. On savait que Louis Calas s'était tenu caché après son abjuration. On prétendit (entre autres la femme du perruquier Durand) qu'il craignait d'être tué par ses parents. Mme Calas, confrontée avec cette femme, déclara faux tout ce qu'elle avait dit et ajouta :

« Que Louis Calas son fils ne se tenoit caché que pour ne pas faire la volonté de son père et de sa mère, quoique cela lui fût ordonné par M. le procureur général. »

Il s'agissait de son refus d'aller vivre à Nîmes. On

1. E. de B. 3. Tous les exemples que nous venons de citer ont été relevés par nous-même sur les manuscrits aux Archives Impériales.

2. *Arch. Imp.*

3. Devant Eyssautier, Père de l'Oratoire.

affirma que ses parents l'avaient sequestré dans la cave, l'y laissaient nu-pieds et privé de tout ; qu'il y serait mort de faim si Viguière ne lui eût apporté à manger. Confrontée avec l'auteur de cette calomnie, Jeannette répliqua :

« Qu'il n'y a rien de si faux que les faits rapportés par le témoin, que ledit Louis n'a jamais été mis dans la cave, ni menacé, l'accusée étant la seule dans la maison instruite de la conversion dudit Louis Calas. »

Enfin, on prétendit que Calas père avait tiré un coup de pistolet en plein visage à son fils, ce que l'on prouvait par de nombreuses marques que le jeune homme avait sur la figure. Il fallut produire le certificat du chirurgien Camoire, qui l'avait longtemps soigné pour cet accident ; et qui certifia qu'un pétard avec lequel il jouait lui avait éclaté dans les mains<sup>1</sup>.

Un autre témoin prétendit que, lors de la conversion de Louis, Mme Calas s'était écriée que, si elle l'avait prévue, elle aurait étranglé son fils pendant la longue maladie qui fut la suite de son accident, et où elle le soigna nuit et jour avec toute la tendresse d'une mère.

Un clerc tonsuré, M<sup>e</sup> Jean-Pierre Debru, vint raconter à la justice un ridicule et affreux roman qu'il tenait, disait-il, de son frère l'avocat, qui ne se rappelait pas de qui il le tenait lui-même. Une mère protestante qui habitait hors de Toulouse, s'aperçoit que sa fille veut se faire catholique. Elle l'envoie aussitôt à Toulouse avec une lettre pour M. Calas, qu'elle prie de lui rendre le service de tuer sa fille. Celle-ci, ne trouvant que Marc-Antoine dans la boutique, lui remet la lettre ; il la lit, avertit l'innocente victime et la met en sûreté, la louant fort de vouloir se convertir. — Il est très-re-

1. Ce certificat est au procès.

grettable que le frère de l'abbé n'ait pu se souvenir de qui il avait appris cette infâme calomnie.

N'était-ce point par hasard de celui même qui inventa l'histoire, non moins abominable, de Jeanneton Petit ? Cette pauvre fille aurait été au service de Mme Lavaysse ; *la témoin* veut dire Mme Calas ; mais, auprès du reste, cette légère inexactitude ne mérite pas d'être relevée. Jeanneton Petit voulut se faire catholique. Sa maîtresse lui donna sur les doigts un si furieux coup de tranche-lard que... les doigts tombèrent ? non ; le coutelas resta dans la plaie.

Nous demanderions pardon au lecteur de faire passer sous ses yeux d'aussi indignes sottises, si nous n'étions obligé de montrer le procès tel qu'il est, et s'il n'était indispensable de faire bien apprécier les nombreuses dépositions qui firent condamner Jean Calas.

Voici d'ailleurs une série de quatre faux témoins parfaitement reconnaissables, et qu'il importe de démasquer.

Le premier est Jean Pérès, garçon perruquier (chez les Durand) Selon sa déposition, au moment où les cris poussés dans la maison avaient effrayé le quartier, il vit par les fentes de la boutique Jean Calas « se promener, une lumière à la main, sans aucun signe d'affliction ni de tristesse. » Ce n'était donc pas lui dont les cris avaient été entendus ; il avait tout le calme d'un scélérat endurci, et cela au moment où il venait d'étrangler son propre fils. On confronta l'accusé avec le témoin. Calas et lui commencèrent par de mutuels démentis, et il ne semblait pas qu'entre leurs deux assertions aucune preuve pût se produire, quand l'accusé s'avisait de demander comment Pérès l'avait vu habillé. Le faux témoin hésita et répondit : « A peu près comme vous voilà. » Or, en ce moment, il était en habit, tandis que David lui-même et ceux qui l'arrêtèrent, l'avaient trouvé en robe de chambre verte et en bonnet de nuit.



« Et le témoin a dit qu'attendu qu'il ne pouvait voir que d'un seul œil à travers les fentes, il n'examina pas la façon dont il était habillé.

« Et l'accusé a dit que la différence d'un habit à une robe de chambre est sensible. »

La défense demanda à prouver que les fentes à travers lesquelles Pérès disait avoir regardé n'existaient pas. On ne fit aucun examen de ce point de fait.

Autre calomnie : Toinette Lezat, veuve d'un cuisinier et blanchisseuse, avait été, pendant un mois et demi, la nourrice de Marc-Antoine Calas, et depuis était restée sans aucune relation avec la famille qui lui avait retiré cet enfant. Elle inventa fort maladroitement tout un dialogue entre elle et son ancien nourrisson, dialogue très-grave, s'il avait été réel, parce qu'il aurait parfaitement prouvé que Marc-Antoine allait se faire catholique. Mme Calas *reprocha* ce témoin dès qu'elle le vit, disant que lorsqu'elle lui avait retiré son fils, Toinette leur souhaita à elle et à son enfant *toute sorte de malédictions*. Le dialogue était un conte fait à plaisir, et *la témoin* s'animant par degrés se discrédita tout à fait, dès son premier interrogatoire, par la stupide impudence avec laquelle elle affirma avoir déjà été interrogée et avoir certifié les mêmes choses devant un autre Capitoul, au petit consistoire. Le fait était faux. Elle n'avait pas compris que cet embellissement de l'édifice le faisait crouler tout entier.

Catherine Daumière ou plutôt Dolmier, couturière, née à Béziers, logée au faubourg de Saint-Étienne, chez la Delaliasse et se disant *nouvelle convertie*, rapporta une longue conversation qu'elle aurait eue avec Marc-Antoine. Il l'aborda, dit-elle, en lui disant qu'il savait qu'on lui avait offert une boutique à Montauban, mais qu'il l'avertissait que c'était un piège pour la faire retomber dans le protestantisme. Il lui promit de lui prêter le *Chrétien en Solitude* et un livre tiré de *saint Fran-*

*cois de Sales* par la dame de Chantal. Il lui dit qu'il était entre les mains d'un bon confesseur, qu'il devait se confesser le mardi suivant ; mais que si on le savait chez lui, il serait... (perdu).

Pas un de ces détails si précis et si complets ne se trouva vrai ; la prétendue nouvelle-convertie était catholique de naissance et de profession, comme on le prouva par des actes authentiques et par des informations prises dans sa famille<sup>1</sup>. Inutile d'ajouter que jamais Marc-Antoine n'avait possédé les livres qu'il aurait offert de lui prêter.

Il nous reste à citer la Domenge-Lavigne, ou plutôt sa mère, Cécile Gaffié. La Domenge était une misérable créature qui venait de subir la peine du fouet et qui était encore détenue dans les prisons de l'hôtel de ville. On fit coucher la servante des Calas dans le même cachot que cette malheureuse. Elle prétendit, le lendemain, que Jeanne lui avait avoué, dans la nuit, l'assassinat de son jeune maître par le père et par Lavaysse, et elle en faisait le récit à sa façon. On ne pouvait, d'après la loi, faire comparaître comme témoin la Domenge. Sa mère, à qui elle avait débité ce mensonge, se chargea de son rôle. On n'eut pas honte de consentir à l'entendre. Voici comment Jeanne Viguiier repoussa un si odieux mensonge, dans sa confrontation avec Cécile Gaffié :

« L'accusée a dit, que ce que la témoin a rapporté dans sa déposition lui avoir été dit par sa fille est très-faux, et que personne ne peut lui prouver que cela soit vrai, et voudrait être confrontée avec la fille de la témoin, qui ne le lui soutiendrait pas. »

Nous finirons cette longue énumération de calomnies par un point moins grave, mais qui peut n'être pas

1. Voir aux *Archives Imp.*, le certificat délivré par le curé de Sainte-Madeleine de Béziers. Il n'y avait à cette époque aucun protestant à Béziers.

absolument imaginaire, sans que les prévenus aient pour cela aucun blâme à encourir. Il s'agit de menaces violentes de Calas à l'égard de Marc-Antoine. Il est fort possible que son père lui ait vivement reproché sa passion désordonnée pour le jeu de paume, le billard et l'escrime. Il se peut que, prononcés dans une boutique ouverte, quelques mots sévères aient été entendus de la rue et qu'ils aient donné lieu aux exagérations mensongères que nous allons rapporter. Nous devons le dire cependant, Calas a déclaré que, pour ne pas nuire à Marc-Antoine, *il cachait la passion de son fils pour le billard*<sup>1</sup>, et les scènes presque publiques qu'on a rapportées sont certainement controuvées. Voici d'abord une déposition parfaitement ridicule par ses incertitudes et les on-dit sur lesquels elle est fondée. Voltaire s'en est plus d'une fois moqué.

Mathey, peintre, dépose :

« Avoir ouï dire à sa femme qu'elle tenoit de la nommée Mandril, que ladite Mandril étant allée le jour de la mort de M.-A. Calas dans la boutique du Sr Calas père, pour acheter de la mousseline, ledit Calas père ou la Dlle Calas mère (le déposant ne se rappelant pas lequel des deux c'étoit) étoient en dispute avec ledit M. A. Calas leur fils, et le père ou la mère dudit Marc-Antoine dirent à son fils : Tu n'auras pas d'autre bourreau que moy. »

Calas répond :

« Qu'il n'y a rien de plus faux que cette déposition et qu'il y a plus de 10 ans qu'il n'auroit pas donné une chiquenaude à Marc-Antoine ni à aucun autre de ses enfants de cet âge-là; que les plus fortes menaces qu'il leur ait faites sont *de luy passer la porte*<sup>2</sup> s'ils n'étaient pas plus assidus à ses affaires. »

Deux revendeuses de hardes, auxquelles Calas déclare avoir refusé des étoffes à crédit, la nommée Danduze et Marion Couderc son associée, prétendent que la

1. Confr. de J. Calas.

2. Locution vulgaire du pays pour *les mettre à la porte*.

dernière a vu Calas tenant son fils par le collet de l'habit et lui disant : *Coquin, il ne t'en coûtera que la vie.*

Enfin, un sieur Bergeret, en passant devant la boutique, au milieu de la semaine qui précéda la mort de Marc-Antoine, y aperçut, dit-il, l'homme habillé de gris, portant un chapeau bordé, et entendit Calas père lui dire : *S'il change ou s'il ne change, je lui servirai de bourreau.* Voilà encore une déposition qui nous paraît mensongère, qui est tout au moins très-suspecte. On y retrouve la description du costume de Gaubert Lavaysse. Le fait est faux quant à Lavaysse, puisqu'il n'arriva que le 12 à Toulouse; s'il s'agit de tout autre, ce détail n'a plus de valeur. Il en est de même de la menace qui peut signifier également : s'il change de religion ou s'il ne change de conduite; mais le propos dans aucun cas ne nous paraît vraisemblable.

A tous ces témoignages qui représentent Calas comme maltraitant son fils aîné, il faut opposer celui de son plus proche voisin et de son ennemi, le perruquier Durand, qui du reste se montra dans ses déclarations beaucoup plus juste et plus impartial que sa femme et son fils l'abbé :

« Il dépose qu'il est le plus proche voisin de la maison du Sr Calas, qui n'est séparée que par le mur mitoyen, et qu'il n'a jamais entendu les père et mère de Calas fils aîné le maltraiter. »

Nous avons achevé maintenant la discussion des témoignages, à l'exception de ceux qui concernent une seule question, mais décisive : Marc-Antoine avait-il abjuré le protestantisme? Si le contraire est démontré, il n'y a plus de martyre, plus de parricide, plus de procès. Viguière<sup>1</sup>, qui devait le savoir mieux que personne et avant tout autre, nie énergiquement tout penchant de Marc-Antoine pour le catholicisme.

1. Interr. et Confr.

Il faut remarquer que c'est là un fait qui ne serait pas difficile à constater. On cite quelques cas de convertis au catholicisme qui ont feint longtemps d'être protestants et qui même en auraient obtenu la permission de l'autorité ecclésiastique, chose honteuse pour elle encore plus que pour eux. Il n'est pas nécessaire de faire remarquer que pas un seul n'a été étranglé et n'a risqué de l'être. Ce qui les a trahis, c'est qu'on a retrouvé soit chez eux, soit plutôt sur leurs personnes, quelque objet de dévotion, livres d'heures, de messe, ou autres, images, croix, crucifix, reliques, médailles, chapelets. Chez Marc-Antoine, rien de pareil. Le premier procès-verbal de descente (c'est-à-dire d'état des lieux) étant trop manifestement incomplet, on fit une seconde descente; on visita l'armoire de Marc-Antoine, et tout ce qu'elle contenait fut porté au nouveau domicile des demoiselles Calas. On n'y trouva rien, absolument rien, qui indiquât la moindre pensée de catholicisme. Et sur le corps même, au lieu de croix ou de chapelets, on ne découvrit que les *vers et chansons obscènes* que David se hâta de détruire comme peu convenables à la poeche d'un martyr. Ne les conçoit-on pas mieux chez un jeune homme joueur et désordonné qui finit par se tuer, que chez un nouveau converti qui meurt martyr la veille de sa première communion?

Mais une abjuration, une première communion, une confession même, sont choses qu'on ne peut faire seul. Il y faut au moins l'assistance d'un prêtre, et voilà un second fait, qui, plus d'une fois, a trahi des projets d'abjuration qu'on n'osait avouer soi-même. Marc-Antoine a-t-il eu des relations avec des prêtres? Il devait abjurer; entre les mains de qui? communier; dans quelle église? La justice a dû retrouver le prêtre qui l'avait instruit (car on n'abjure, on ne communie pas du jour au lendemain, sans instruction préalable); elle a dû connaître le confesseur qui a reçu ses aveux. Il

ne manque pas de prêtres ni de moines au procès, soit recevant les dépositions, curés, vicaires ou pères de l'Oratoire, soit témoins à décharge comme le chanoine Azimond, soit témoins à charge comme les abbés Durand et Benaben, comme cet hebdomadier de Saint-Étienne et ce clerc tonsuré dont nous avons cité les étranges aberrations; soit une foule d'autres que nous allons indiquer encore. Pas un n'a pu dire avoir une seule fois ouï Marc-Antoine, ni en confession ni autrement. Ce n'est pas seulement la justice, c'est l'official, c'est leur archevêque qui leur commande de venir dire ce qu'ils savent, et cela dans une cause qu'on a proclamée *très-intéressante pour la religion*; c'est sous la menace de l'excommunication que cet ordre leur est donné par leurs supérieurs ecclésiastiques; l'excommunication enfin n'est plus seulement annoncée, elle est promulguée, fulminée, avec un sombre appareil; et, après tout cela, pas un prêtre ne peut redire un seul mot que lui ait dit Marc-Antoine en vue de se convertir! Comment ne voit-on pas tout ce que cette preuve négative a de décisif?

On eut peine à s'y résigner. Des voix populaires faisaient honneur tantôt à tel curé, tantôt à tel jésuite, de la conversion de Marc-Antoine. Le bruit ne manquait pas d'en venir bientôt à David, à Lagane, à Bonrepos; et quand l'ecclésiastique désigné comparaisait, quand on croyait tenir enfin cet introuvable confesseur, qu'obtenait-on? Rien, ou de simples oui-dire. On fit défiler ainsi un à un devant la justice le supérieur de la maison professe des RR. PP. jésuites, le supérieur du séminaire, le P. Latour, les PP. Dupuy, de Chottel, Dulhe, Delmas, By et Jeard, le P. Pochat, franciscain, le sous-prieur des trinitaires.

Survient la veuve Massaleng, née Jeanne Paignon, qui dit que la demoiselle sa fille lui a dit que le sieur Pagès lui a dit que M. Soulié lui a dit que la demoiselle

Guichardet lui a dit que la demoiselle Journu lui a dit quelque chose d'où elle a conclu que le père Serrant, jésuite, pourrait bien avoir été le confesseur de Calas aîné<sup>1</sup>.

Aussitôt on mande le père Serrant (ou Serrane) et tout ce laborieux échafaudage se réduit à rien en un instant.

Enfin, la nouvelle se répand que le confesseur est connu : c'est l'abbé Laplaigne. Ce fut d'abord un bruit vague, et si l'on veut savoir comment de pareilles inventions se propageaient, il suffit de lire la déposition par écrit de la demoiselle *Françoise-Agathe Planet* : « Étant avec M. Olivier, vicaire de Saint-Étienne, la conversation tomba sur le confesseur de Marc-Antoine Calas, dont je souhaitais de savoir le nom ; et, pour engager M. Olivier à me le déclarer, je dis à M. Olivier que c'était M. Laplaigne. » Il se trouva que M. Olivier savait le contraire et le dit à Mlle Planet ; sans quoi elle lui aurait fait croire ce qu'elle aurait voulu.

Un valet de M. d'Aldéguier poussa le zèle plus loin encore ; il affirma avoir vu un jeune homme sortant, le mouchoir sur la bouche, du confessionnal, et quittant l'abbé Laplaigne ; on lui apprit plus tard que ce jeune homme n'était autre que Marc-Antoine. Malheureusement pour lui il eut la maladresse de placer cette scène à l'église de la Dalbade, dont le curé déclara par écrit<sup>2</sup> que jamais M. Laplaigne n'y avait confessé.

Le procureur du roi Lagane lança un *brief intendit* en cinq questions auxquelles l'abbé Laplaigne fut tenu de répondre. De plus, comme on crut que l'abbé craignait de violer le secret de la confession, s'il avouait le fait, Lagane consulta un professeur en théologie de l'ordre de Saint-Dominique, le père Bourges ou Bourgis<sup>3</sup>.

1. La déposition que nous venons de résumer existe aux Arch. Imp.

2. Arch. Imp.

3. On sait que cet ordre fut chargé par les papes de l'office de l'inqui-

La réponse portait non-seulement que l'abbé Laplaigne pouvait, sans manquer au secret de la confession, révéler le fait, mais qu'il le devait, pour obéir au monitoire<sup>1</sup>.

L'hésitation de l'abbé avait une autre cause. Un jeune protestant de vingt-deux ans, qui montrait quelque intention d'abjurer, s'était confessé à lui trois fois; l'abbé Terrade<sup>2</sup>, son ami, avait vu chez lui ce jeune homme qui n'avait pas dit son nom, et aucun indice ne faisait croire aux deux prêtres que ce fût Marc-Antoine. Cependant l'identité n'était pas absolument impossible, quoique Marc-Antoine eût vingt-huit ans et non vingt-deux. Ils demandèrent ensemble à voir le cadavre, mais il était trop tard et tous deux déclarent « qu'ils n'ont rien vu, sur ce visage défiguré, qui pût décider leurs doutes. »

On finit par découvrir que le jeune inconnu ne pouvait être Marc-Antoine, et voici comment : tout ce que l'abbé Laplaigne se rappela positivement, c'est qu'il avait confessé ce jeune homme le jour de Noël 1760; et l'on produisit plus tard au procès une attestation, signée du curé et de quatorze habitants de Brassac, prouvant que Marc-Antoine était arrivé à Brassac la veille de Noël et n'en était parti que le surlendemain.

Ne trouvant aucun indice d'abjuration ni même de confession, on chercha un acte quelconque de catho-

sition, et l'est encore. On a pu voir dans l'Introduction que, jusque dans le dix-huitième siècle, un théologien de cet ordre porta à Toulouse le titre d'*inquisiteur*. Lagane était donc fidèle à la tradition en s'adressant à un dominicain.

1. La consultation du procureur du roi et la réponse du moine ne furent point jointes au procès, mais ces deux pièces ont été conservées, et les archives du parlement de Toulouse en possèdent actuellement des copies certifiées, d'après les originaux prêtés par M. d'Aldéguier, l'historien, qui les tenait de M. le marquis de Catelan, ancien avocat général au parlement de Toulouse. Ces deux pièces sont reproduites aux pages 610 et 612 du recueil qui provient de M. Gastambide. (Voir la préface en tête de ce volume.)

2. Et non Lenade comme on l'a écrit ailleurs.



licité dans la vie de Marc-Antoine et surtout dans ses derniers jours; on chercha tant, que l'on trouva. L'histoire est fort ingénieusement arrangée, si elle n'est pas bien racontée :

« Le père J.-B. Coq, religieux de la Grande Observance, compagnon du confesseur des religieuses de la Porte, résidant dans le couvent desdites religieuses, âgé d'environ 51 ans, a entendu dire aux dames qui sont portières de ladite maison, que le 15 octobre un inconnu porta aux dites dames religieuses 12 livres pour se recommander à leurs prières, disant qu'il devoit faire sa première communion le lendemain et refusant de se nommer. »

Elles ne le virent pas, parce qu'elles ne parlaient aux visiteurs qu'à travers un tour, sans les voir jamais.

Le nom du donateur manque dans ce récit. En voici un autre pour le compléter, où nous verrons en même temps ce qui se disait dans la foule qui regarda passer les accusés, le 18 novembre, lorsqu'on les conduisit des prisons de l'hôtel de ville à celles du palais.

L'an mil sept cent soixante-un, et le 14<sup>e</sup> du mois de décembre, par devant nous, prêtre et vicaire de l'église paroissiale Saint-Michel, annexe de Saint-Étienne de cette ville, soussigné, a comparu demoiselle Barthelemye Cinges, épouse d'Arnaud Baptiste, habitante de notre paroisse dans la rue de l'Observatoire, âgée de soixante-deux ans, qui, en conséquence du chef du monitoire, nous a révélé que se trouvant au Salin<sup>1</sup> lorsqu'on conduisait les Calas au palais, la femme du nommé Castelnau, cordonnier, qui loge dans le palais, lui dit que M.-A. Calas décédé avoit été avant sa mort aux religieuses de la Porte, leur porter 12 livres afin de prier pour luy, qu'il devoit faire son bonjour le lendemain, que de là, dit-elle, il fut au billard avant de rentrer chez luy et de là s'étant rendu à la maison de son père, quelque temps après, ledit M.-A. Calas disoit à son père et à sa mère : « Quoi, mon père, ma mère, vous voulez m'étrangler ! » à quoy l'un et l'autre répondirent qu'ils n'avoient plus de fils. Et la révélatrice ayant demandé à ladite Castelnau d'où elle tenoit cela, elle luy répondit qu'elle le savoit de sa nièce qui sert depuis longtemps le S<sup>r</sup> Durand, perruquier, qui loge auprès dudit Calas, en qualité de servante, ou bien lui faisant service dans la maison<sup>2</sup>.

1. C'est une des places de Toulouse. — 2. Encore les Durand !

.... Requête de signer a dit ne savoir. En foi de quoi, etc.

CHAUBET, prêtre et vicaire, signé.

D'après un grand nombre de témoignages que nous allons relever avec précision, mais très-sommairement, on aurait vu souvent Calas aîné dans les églises. Alquier, témoin à décharge, qui déposa dans le dernier procès, déclare :

Que jamais il n'a paru vouloir changer ; tout au contraire ; « quoique souvent ils ont été ensemble dans les églises pour voir les curiosités qui y sont, examiner les châsses et autres ornements précieux qui se trouvent en abondance dans la ville de Toulouse. »

Il n'y a rien d'étonnant dans les dépositions de Delpech, qui l'a vu au sermon de Saint-Germain, ni de François Bordes qui l'a accompagné au sermon dans trois églises différentes, mais *jamais à la messe*. On sait d'autre part que Marc-Antoine, qui se piquait d'éloquence et de littérature, alla plus d'une fois entendre le prédicateur en vogue, un *doctrinaire* nommé le père Torné ; ce que tout autre protestant aurait pu faire à sa place. On ne peut s'étonner non plus de ce que dit Montesquieu qu'il alla à vêpres, ou à la bénédiction, mais *jamais à la messe*. Il se peut aussi que Jean Capoulac l'ait entendu, dans l'église du Taur, dire d'un crucifix qu'on admirait : *Voilà un beau christ !* quoique en général les protestants ne désignent guère par le nom de christ l'effigie du Crucifié.

Ajoutons que des protestants, surtout s'ils sont absolument privés de leur propre culte, comme on l'était à Toulouse, peuvent parfaitement chercher quelque édification dans les sermons catholiques sans songer pour cela à entrer dans l'église romaine.

Mais il s'est produit des assertions plus graves. Une jeune fille de seize ans (Dlle Mendouze) a entendu la messe à côté de M. A. Calas. Le nommé Latour l'avait vu

prier dans une église. Ce même Bergeret, que nous avons déjà soupçonné de faux témoignage, tenait de sa couturière qu'un garçon marchand qu'elle connaissait, avait été plus de *cent* fois à la messe avec Marc-Antoine. La femme du perruquier Durand l'a vu deux fois dans des églises, très-près des confessionnaux; elle n'est pas même très-sûre qu'il ne fût pas dedans. Platte, maître d'escrime, chargé de quêter dans l'église de Saint-Sernin pour l'entretien des quarante châsses qu'on y conserve, y a vu Marc-Antoine à genoux, prier successivement dans chaque chapelle souterraine et a reçu de lui une fois deux sous et une fois six livres pour sa quête.

D'autres protestants ont peut-être visité les églises le jeudi saint, même trois ans de suite, pour y entendre les chants et y voir les pompes de ce jour; mais l'architecte Arnal ajoute qu'il *y priait fort dévotement*. Le même Arnal l'a vu suivre deux processions et s'agenouiller sur le passage du saint viatique, *quoiqu'on voulût l'en empêcher*. Montesqueu et Jean Capoulac disent aussi qu'il s'agenouillait devant le saint-sacrement et ajoutent qu'il priait, ainsi prosterné. La déposition d'Arnal nous semble fort suspecte; si quelqu'un avait voulu empêcher qu'il s'agenouillât devant l'hostie, les premiers venus lui auraient fait un mauvais parti ou au moins l'auraient livré ou dénoncé à la police. Pour croire de pareilles dépositions, il faut ignorer combien, dans le Midi, le peuple catholique est jaloux du respect qu'il exige pour ses processions.

Claude Caperan prétend avoir vu un fait parfaitement incroyable : Marc-Antoine suivant, le chapeau sous le bras, la procession du 17 mai, qui était la commémoration du massacre de quatre mille huguenots. Claude Caperan a été trop sot pour comprendre qu'il n'aurait pas été seul à l'y voir, ni à le déclarer, et que toute la ville aurait remarqué ce protestant fêtant le

meurtre de ses pères. Claude Caperan était le marchand chez lequel l'archevêque avait placé Louis Calas; il déclara aussi que Louis lui avait dit que sa mère avait dit à Viguière, qui le lui avait répété à lui-même, que ses maux ne finiraient que lorsqu'elle verrait son fils pendu. Mot atroce, inventé pour donner quelque apparence au meurtre de l'ainé. Peut-on douter que Caperan ne soit un faux témoin? Est-il croyable que Mme Calas ait prononcé ce vœu parricide, et que la servante ait été redire à Marc-Antoine que sa mère lui avait souhaité une mort affreuse? Il faut convenir que Mgr de Crussol avait mal placé sa confiance.

Baron, marchand apothicaire, dépose « que le 12 octobre, étant à cheval, il prit en croupe le défunt qui lui dit qu'il ferait sa première communion le lendemain, qui fut le jour de sa mort. » Nous avons prouvé que cette première communion fixée au lendemain est une fable. Ceux qui la répètent par oui-dire peuvent être sincères; telle est, par exemple, Marie-Anne Serres qui y revient par trois fois, en indiquant même que la cérémonie devait se faire à l'église de la Trinité; tel est Bros, dit Coudom, qui

« A entendu dire par un nombre infini de personnes qui ont passé successivement dans le quartier, que ledit sieur Calas ayné avoit changé de croyance et qu'il devoit faire aujourd'hui (15 octobre) sa première communion. »

Mais Baron, qui dit tenir le fait du prétendu martyr lui-même, a menti.

La veuve Hubert a poussé plus loin le talent de l'invention. Elle fait hardiment remonter à quatre années le catholicisme de Marc-Antoine, et raconte que le jour de Noël, quatre ans auparavant, elle l'avait vu à Saint-Sernin, à genoux par terre et les deux mains croisées sur la poitrine, pendant qu'on chantait le cantique de la Nativité. Elle prétend lui avoir dit familièrement:

*Ah ! Calasou !* mais il lui fit signe de se taire. Auprès de lui, un jeune homme protestant, qui était pensionnaire des Calas, gardait le chapeau sur la tête, au moment où passait la procession du saint-sacrement. Marc-Antoine Calas se tourna, « lui ôta le chapeau de la tête, le jeta à terre et lui dit d'un ton impérieux et absolu : « A genoux, notre Maître passe ! » Encore une histoire absolument incroyable ; on ne pourrait pas, le voulût-on, garder son chapeau, dans une église, en présence d'une procession et du *saint-sacrement*. C'est encore un fait que bien d'autres auraient attesté s'il s'était passé ailleurs que dans l'imagination de cette femme. Elle donna d'ailleurs une étrange idée d'elle en allant, sous prétexte d'intérêt affectueux, s'établir et coucher chez les demoiselles Calas, probablement pour espionner ou exploiter ces deux jeunes filles qui se trouvaient sans famille et sans servante. Elle refusa de quitter la maison quand ces demoiselles le lui commandèrent, et il fallut qu'elles priassent un voisin de la chasser.

Nous sommes très-certains que la veuve Hube-  
 Baron, Claude Caperan, Arnal, ont menti par fraude pieuse ou par excès de zèle ; mais il y a, dans les dispositions précédentes, des faits trop nombreux pour qu'on puisse les rejeter tous. Calas lui-même nous fournira à cet égard une explication très-plausible. Il réplique, dans ses confrontations, à l'un des déposants que nous venons d'indiquer : que ce témoin, comme bien d'autres, peut avoir confondu Marc-Antoine avec Louis, attendu qu'ils portaient des habits presque uniformes avec des boutons de pinchebec. Il aurait pu ajouter que tous ses enfants se ressemblaient beaucoup. Il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce qu'on ait attribué au mort quelques-uns des actes de dévotion de son frère catho-

lique. Quand une famille est nombreuse, les étrangers confondent sans cesse les prénoms des enfants ; il y avait là trois jeunes hommes, dont les âges se suivaient ; et les témoins ont pu prendre l'un pour l'autre.

On a pensé aussi que peut-être Calas aîné avait fréquenté à dessein les églises catholiques pour obtenir le certificat sans lequel il ne pouvait être reçu avocat. On rappelle à ce sujet que la fiction légale de la catholicité de toute la France régnait encore, à tel point que les protestants étaient officiellement désignés sous le nom de *nouveaux convertis*. On ajoute qu'ils ne pouvaient subsister qu'en faisant de faux actes de religion ; on rappelle que David Lavaysse et son fils Étienne n'avaient pu être reçus avocats que de cette manière ; que lui et ses enfants avaient été élevés par les jésuites, ce qui ne se pouvait sans beaucoup d'actes semblables<sup>1</sup> ; que tous les enfants de M. et Mme Calas avaient été baptisés dans l'Église romaine, et enfin que se découvrir et même s'agenouiller devant le viatique ou devant une procession était un hommage obligatoire, imposé par la force pour peu qu'on hésitât à l'accomplir. Tous ces arguments peuvent avoir quelque valeur, mais ils ne nous semblent guères s'accorder avec le caractère et les idées de Marc-Antoine. Nous demeurons convaincu que, dans les dépositions précédentes, ce qui n'est pas rêverie, mensonge ou rencontre insignifiante et fortuite doit s'appliquer, non à lui, mais à son frère Louis.

Quoi qu'il en soit de ces détails, il est de fait que Marc-Antoine n'avait nullement l'intention d'entrer dans la communion de Rome, et nous allons achever de le prouver.

1. Ceci prouve le peu que valent les arguments de M. Jal dans son *Dictionnaire historique* et ceux d'autres écrivains modernes, qui nient qu'Ambroise Paré, par exemple, fût protestant, et cela sur la foi d'actes de baptême ou de sépulture. Toutes les familles protestantes ont subi, plus ou moins, de pareilles contraintes pendant plus de deux cents ans.

Rappelons d'abord sa réponse à M<sup>e</sup> Beaux<sup>1</sup> qu'il ne serait jamais reçu avocat, parce qu'il ne voulait faire *aucun* acte de catholicité. Il ne manque pas de témoignages qui s'accordent avec cette déclaration formelle. Le chanoine Azimond déposa qu'il avait souvent vu à Toulouse Jean Calas et ses enfants; que Marc-Antoine était *très-éloigné* de se faire catholique. Nous avons déjà cité<sup>2</sup> ce que rapporta ce même témoin sur la colère de Calas aîné au sujet de la conversion de son frère Louis.

Pierre Tenery vint rapporter à la justice une foule de *on dit*; ainsi, il a entendu la demoiselle Latour raconter que Marc-Antoine Calas lui a présenté l'eau bénite à l'église des Carmes; il tient aussi d'un sieur Bien-aize qu'un nommé Nouganol se trouvant un jour avec Marc-Antoine, Louis Calas vint à passer et Nouganol demanda à l'aîné s'il ne voulait pas changer comme son frère, à quoi Marc-Antoine répondit « qu'il en était bien éloigné, et que si l'on eût su que son frère eût dû abjurer, on l'en eût bien empêché. » Cette déposition est d'autant plus importante que Ténery est un témoin tout à fait hostile; selon lui, ce mot de Marc-Antoine signifie qu'on aurait étranglé son frère. Il est au moins aussi naturel de croire qu'il voulait dire simplement que les raisonnements et l'influence de sa famille auraient détourné Louis de se faire catholique, si l'on avait connu son dessein avant le jour où il disparut. Cela est même probable, d'après la faiblesse bien démontrée du personnage.

Voici une autre déclaration indirecte, mais qui a sa valeur :

La Dlle Guyonnet, marchande à Toulouse, déclare n'avoir jamais entendu dire que Marc-Antoine Calas dût changer de religion. « Au contraire, deux messieurs étant venus, quelques jours

1. Voir plus haut, p. 47. — 2. P. 49.

avant sa mort, dans ma boutique pour m'acheter des marchandises, s'entretenaient ensemble, se disant que Marc-Antoine Calas voulait passer à Genève pour se faire ministre de la Religion protestante. »

La signature est attestée par Jean de MOULON,  
*Lieutenant principal au Sénéchal.*

Ces témoignages sont clairs. Mais le plus important de tous est celui de M<sup>e</sup> Chalier, cet avocat dont nous avons déjà parlé et qui seul eut le courage de déposer en faveur des Calas devant les Capitouls, après être allé dire à son curé qu'il avait des renseignements importants à donner. Ils le sont en effet, mais dans un tout autre sens qu'on ne l'espérait.

M<sup>e</sup> Jean-François Chalier, docteur et avocat au Parlement, 60<sup>e</sup> témoin, raconta en grand détail une conversation du 28 ou 29 septembre 1761, où Marc-Antoine Calas parlait avec envie des jeunes négociants qui passaient par Toulouse, allant à la foire de Bordeaux, et se plaignait de ce que son père ne voulait ni lui donner des appointements, ni l'associer avec lui, ni le mettre à même de s'associer avec quelque autre<sup>1</sup>.

Là dessus, le déposant lui dit que s'il étoit à sa place, il sauroit bien forcer son père à lui donner satisfaction d'une façon ou d'autre.

« Le dit Calas dit alors au déposant ; quel expédient il prendrait ?

« Le déposant lui dit : Je me ferais catholique ou je ferais menacer mon père de m'en faire.

« Ledit Calas répondit au déposant qu'il ne prendrait pas ce parti, mais qu'il en prendrait un autre qu'il mettrait à exécution.

« Le même témoin dépose, de plus, que dans le mois de juin

1. Était-ce dureté de la part de Calas ? Loin de là. L'état précaire de son commerce le mettait dans l'impossibilité d'agir autrement. Quand, par son arrestation, le crédit et le travail cessèrent tout à coup chez lui, il n'y resta que la pauvreté. Deux mois après le supplice (le 22 mai 1762), M. de Saint-Florentin écrivait à M. de Saint-Priest : « Au reste, M. le Procureur Général du Parlement m'avait déjà informé du désordre où sont les affaires de Calas et de l'insuffisance de ses biens pour le paiement de ses créanciers. » (*Arch. de Montpellier.*)



dernier, ledit Calas étant allé voir le déposant qui étoit avec son frère le prêtre, on vint à parler de religion ; que le frère du déposant eut beau lui parler de la religion catholique, ledit Calas ne voulut jamais convenir de rien. »

Ici M<sup>e</sup> Chalier raconte le projet d'association de Marc-Antoine avec un sieur Roux, projet qui échoua parce que Calas père ne put cautionner son fils pour 6000 livres ; cette affaire, dont le peu de succès dut contribuer à décourager le jeune homme, est de la fin de juillet ou du commencement d'août, six semaines avant le suicide.

Voici les derniers mots de la déposition de M<sup>e</sup> Chalier :

« Que maintes fois le déposant a eu parlé de religion avec ledit Calas décédé et entre autres choses de la fin tragique des ministres de cette religion. Ledit Calas répondit au déposant que ces personnes étoient bien heureuses de mourir pour leur religion et qu'il envioit leur sort. Le déposant lui dit alors, pour le dissuader, que tout mettier qui faisoit pendre son homme ne valait rien. »

« A ajouté que lorsque le déposant lui dit que tout mettier qui faisoit pendre son homme ne valoit rien, ledit Calas venait de lui dire que souvent il avoit eu dessein d'aller à Genève pour se faire ministre. »

M<sup>e</sup> Chalier indiqua un témoin, qui pouvait attester les mêmes faits ; mais c'étoit un protestant. Il ne fut point cité. On voit par cette déposition, et il étoit naturel de présumer, qu'au milieu de ses hésitations sur sa carrière, Marc-Antoine dût être mis en demeure de se convertir, et sinon tenté par l'évidence de son intérêt matériel, au moins sollicité par autrui. Il le fut non-seulement par les avocats Beaux et Chalier, mais par un personnage plus haut placé, ce même M. Delamote, conseiller au Parlement et secrétaire de l'Université, qui s'étoit occupé de l'abjuration de Louis. Voici en quels termes M<sup>e</sup> Sudre raconta le fait, d'après M. Delamote lui-même :

« Un magistrat grave fait un récit qui offre un dénouement plus honorable à la mémoire de Marc-Antoine Calas : l'honneur et la vertu de ce magistrat sont connus, sa parole doit être donc bien efficace. Il a eu part, dit-il, à la conversion de Louis Calas ; il souhaita de remporter la même victoire sur Marc-Antoine Calas ; il l'entretint sur ce sujet, il lui fit naître des doutes.

Marc-Antoine Calas demanda du temps pour délibérer, puis s'examiner et se résoudre : ce fut une affaire de plus d'un jour. Il revient et déclare qu'il s'était affermi dans la foi dans laquelle il avait été élevé. Si ce que ces témoins disent qu'ils ont vu Marc-Antoine à l'église, qu'ils l'ont vu assister à nos saintes cérémonies ; si cela est vrai, il faut le rapporter au temps que Marc-Antoine Calas était ébranlé, qu'il se sentoit des mouvements pour l'église catholique ; mais, comme le rapporte ce magistrat, il eut le malheur de résister à la grâce et de se raffermir dans l'erreur. Il est vrai que ce magistrat n'est pas témoin dans la procédure, mais la cour peut faire aisément qu'il le soit ; il est assis tous les jours à ses côtés ; qu'elle daigne l'appeler et recevoir son serment ; les droits de l'innocence lui sont trop connus pour qu'il se fasse une peine de ce ministère. »

M. Delamote ne répondit jamais à cet appel ; il ne donna point sa déposition. Mais peut-on douter un seul instant que le Procureur général ne l'y aurait contraint, comme cela arriva à l'abbé Laplaigne, si son témoignage eût pu être utile à l'accusation ? Cependant il n'a jamais démenti ce que M<sup>e</sup> Sudre avait eu le courage de publier ainsi, à Toulouse même, au mois de décembre 1761 ou janvier 1762.

Confronté avec Arbanère, le sous-prieur des Pénitents blancs, sur la question de la conversion de Marc-Antoine, Jean Calas déclara « qu'au contraire il avait lieu de croire son fils très-zélé. »

Nous le voyons, en effet, persévérer jusqu'à sa fin dans la profession publique du protestantisme. Il avait fait sa première communion à Nîmes en 1755, au retour de la foire de Beaucaire, au milieu d'une assemblée présidée par un ministre du Saint-Évangile dans une maison particulière. En septembre 1759, il fut parrain d'un enfant baptisé dans une assemblée à Mazamet. A Noël 1760, il prit part à une autre assemblée qui se tint à Vabres. L'année

même de sa mort, il assista le 6 mai à l'enterrement de Jean Lacapelle, qui eut lieu, par ordonnance de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, dans le jardin du sieur Glacié, hors des portes de Toulouse ; il fut présent en juillet à une autre inhumation protestante dans le même lieu, et on l'entendit à cette occasion parler « de l'excellence de sa religion. » Le premier dimanche de septembre 1761 il jeûna suivant l'usage pratiqué alors dans toutes les Églises réformées de France. Il mangea de la viande les vendredis et samedis jusqu'à sa fin. C'était lui qui faisait en famille la prière matin et soir, et, tous les dimanches la lecture d'un sermon, des psaumes et de quelques chapitres de la Bible, « ce qu'il continua jusqu'à la veille de sa mort<sup>1</sup>. »

Nous voici donc arrivés, par une série de faits aussi publics que possible, du jour de sa première communion à la veille même de sa mort, et tous ces faits ne sont pas de simples allégations, mais ont été prouvés officiellement autant que le permettait la législation de l'époque, d'après laquelle tout acte du culte proscrit était un crime.

Il se trouve donc que le prétendu martyr n'avait cessé ni de témoigner qu'il était *fort éloigné* de se faire catholique, ni de professer extérieurement le culte de l'Église réformée. Si la vraie piété avait été en lui aussi puissante que son zèle extérieur était soutenu, jamais il ne se serait laissé entraîner jusqu'au désespoir et au suicide, et il n'aurait pas précipité sa famille dans les longs malheurs que nous avons à peine commencé à faire connaître.

Pour résumer tout ce qui précède, il suffira de remarquer que sur cent cinquante témoins, tous à charge sauf un seul, il n'en est pas un qui dise avoir vu le crime ni aucune circonstance ou indice du crime.

1. Interr. et Confr. de M. et de M<sup>me</sup> Calas, de Jeanne Viguiet, etc.

Quelques-uns disent avoir entendu des cris, des paroles qui constateraient ce crime, mais ils ne s'accordent pas ; il n'y en a pas deux qui rapportent de la même manière les prétendues paroles de Marc-Antoine assassiné. En cela, comme dans tout le reste du procès, chaque point de quelque importance est rapporté différemment par chaque témoin. Or, d'après la loi, tout témoin *singulier*, c'est-à-dire unique, était insuffisant pour prouver quoi que ce fût contre les accusés. En dernière analyse, on se trouve au milieu d'une multitude confuse de rumeurs populaires, incohérentes, souvent vagues, ou dès qu'elles sont plus précises, manifestement partiales et mensongères. L'origine de ces faux bruits est surabondamment expliquée par les dispositions hostiles du peuple à l'égard des protestants, par les antécédents et la faiblesse de Louis Calas, par l'effet que produisirent sur les esprits la pompe funèbre et le double service célébrés en l'honneur du suicidé, et surtout par le *Moniteur*, quatre fois lu à tous les prônes, affiché partout, fulminé enfin dans toutes les paroisses, informant la ville entière des soupçons de l'autorité et enjoignant à chacun, sous les peines les plus redoutées, de venir déclarer à la justice ce dont la justice elle même avait informé tout le monde.

On prétendait cependant compenser l'absence de preuves par le nombre de ces dépositions insuffisantes. Voltaire s'est souvent moqué avec justice de cette dangereuse doctrine. Nous citerons une de ses critiques à ce sujet, et ce n'est pas la plus vive. Il écrit à Damilaville, le 22 mars 1763 :

J'ai appris une des raisons du jugement de Toulouse qui va bien étonner votre raison :

Ces Visigoths ont pour maxime que quatre quarts de preuve, et huit huitièmes font deux preuves complètes ; et ils donnent à des oui-dire le nom de quarts de preuves et de huitièmes. Que dites-vous de cette manière de raisonner et de juger ? Est-il pos-

sible que la vie des hommes dépende de gens aussi absurdes ? Les têtes des Hurons et des Topinambous sont mieux faites<sup>1</sup>.

Tout autre était l'esprit de l'ancienne législation qui avait établi en principe qu'une accusation dont la vérité n'est pas pleinement démontrée doit être tenue pour complètement fausse et que la preuve, si elle n'est entière, est nulle.

*Probatio quæ non est plena veritas, est plena falsitas; sic quod non est plena probatio, planè nulla est probatio.*

D'après ce texte, la condamnation des Calas eût été impossible.

1. On peut répondre à Voltaire qu'il ne s'agit pas plus ici de Visigoths que de Topinambous, mais des règles de la procédure sous le régime de l'Ordonnance de 1670. « Le législateur, dit M. Faustin Hélie, pour donner peut-être un contre-poids à la procédure secrète, avait lié les juges étroitement, par une foule de petites règles qu'il avait semées devant leurs pas et qui enchaînaient complètement leur volonté. Ces règles précisaient à l'avance la valeur légale de chaque fait, de chaque circonstance du procès, matérialisaient les éléments du jugement et dictaient au juge sa décision, indépendamment de sa propre conviction.... Dès que la cause constatait telle preuve, telle présomption, tel indice, il devait attacher à cet indice, à cette présomption, à cette preuve, l'effet que la loi avait voulu lui assigner. » Plus loin l'auteur indique la classification des preuves en *pleines et demi-pleines, manifestes, considérables et imparfaites, concluantes et démonstratives, réelles ou présomptives, affirmatives ou négatives*. Chaque preuve, ensuite, était assujettie à des règles spéciales suivant qu'elle était *vocale, littérale, testimoniale ou conjecturale*. Cette dernière, qui se tirait des *indices, signes, adminicules et présomptions*, était la plus difficile et la plus périlleuse. On distinguait les indices *indubitables* ou *violents, graves et légers*. « Plusieurs indices légers joints ensemble formaient un indice grave; un indice grave valait un peu moins qu'une semi-preuve; deux indices graves formaient un indice violent; un indice violent suffisait pour condamner à la question; plusieurs indices violents devaient entraîner la condamnation définitive, surtout en matière de grands crimes (p. 657.) » Qu'on applique cette méthode à l'affaire qui nous occupe et à cette multitude de témoignages hostiles, on comprendra le danger où étaient les accusés, entre les mains de juges passionnés.



## CHAPITRE VIII.

### PAUL RABAUT ET LES PROTESTANTS DE FRANCE

**Le protestantisme, religion de parricides. — Déclaration de Genève. — La Calomnie confondue. — La Beaumelle et Paul Rabaut. — Réponse de l'abbé de Contezat. — Luther et Calvin cités comme ordonnant le parricide. — Noble réplique de Rabaut. — Son écrit brûlé par le bourreau.**

*Vox clamantis in deserto.*

« Je ne doute pas, Monsieur, écrivait le comte de Saint-Florentin au marquis de Gudane, gouverneur du pays de Foix, de la sensation que la procédure instruite contre les Calas a faite parmi les Religionnaires du païs de Foix. Vous avez très-bien fait d'éclairer leurs démarches durant le cours de cette affaire<sup>1</sup>. »

Ce qui agita et consterna les Églises réformées de France, plus encore que le supplice du pasteur Rochette et de ses trois amis, plus même que le danger des Calas et l'horrible exécution du père de famille, ce fut la calomnie inouïe du Monitoire, accusant, au nom de la justice et par la voie du clergé catholique, les protestants d'enseigner et de mettre en pratique un système d'assassinat à l'égard de leurs propres enfants. « Chaque

1. Dépêche du 10 juin 1762, Arch. Imp.

protestant, écrivait au duc de Fitz-James son agent Alison, regardait cette affaire comme personnelle, parce qu'ils *prétendaient* qu'on avait répandu que la doctrine de Calvin permettait aux parents de tuer leurs enfants qui changeaient de religion<sup>1</sup>. Leurs ennemis allaient jusqu'à expliquer par cette loi imaginaire la durée de leur Église en France ; on ne s'étonnait plus de voir les enfants de ceux qui portaient le titre légal de *Nouveaux-Convertis* persévérer dans l'ancienne foi de leurs pères, puisqu'ils n'auraient pu la quitter qu'au péril de leur vie ; et l'on se disait que la Saint-Barthélemy et la Révocation de l'Édit n'étaient pas des mesures trop cruelles contre une secte si dénaturée et si sanguinaire. On déclamait contre l'horreur d'une religion de parricides ; et les protestants étaient justement indignés d'une calomnie si criante, si inattendue, après deux siècles et demi de martyres, dans un pays autrefois à moitié réformé, où des milliers de pères avaient vu leurs enfants abjurer de gré ou de force, sans qu'un seul les en eût punis par le meurtre.

Les nations protestantes s'étonnèrent que la France, au dix-huitième siècle, eût des populations entières si peu instruites de ce qui se passait au milieu d'elles, et des juges même, si étrangement ignorants. Quand on apprit en Suisse, en Angleterre, en Allemagne, en Hollande, dans les royaumes du Nord, l'incroyable accusation qui pesait sur le protestantisme en France, on en fut stupéfait.

Cette surprise générale aurait été plus profonde encore si l'on avait pu lire ces paroles de M. le président du Puget au principal Ministre :

« Mon zèle pour le service du Roy m'engage de vous représenter, Monseigneur, qu'il seroit essentiel de trouver des moyens pour empêcher l'entrée des Ministres de la Religion prétendue

1. *Egl. du Désert*, t. II, p. 331.

réformée dans le royaume, et empêcher leur commerce avec ceux de la même Religion qui sont dans les pays étrangers, où ils enseignent des maximes sanguinaires qu'ils viennent répandre dans nos contrées, en procurant par là des crimes affreux<sup>1</sup>. »

Ces derniers mots concernaient surtout la Suisse et plus particulièrement encore Genève et Lausanne, où allaient étudier les futurs pasteurs de nos Églises, depuis la réorganisation par Antoine Court d'un ministère régulier. Le bruit courait d'ailleurs, et nous verrons bientôt que ce n'était nullement au hasard, que Calvin avait formellement commandé aux parents de tuer leurs enfants apostats; on citait l'endroit de l'*Institution chrétienne* où devait se trouver cet infâme précepte.

L'avocat Sudre se vit obligé, pour réfuter cette calomnie, d'appeler en témoignage les autorités soit ecclésiastiques, soit civiles de Genève, et publia dans son *Mémoire* la déclaration suivante, dont la nécessité bien constatée nous semble humiliante, non pour ceux qui la donnèrent, mais pour ceux qui avaient besoin de l'entendre. Rien ne prouve mieux, selon nous, la sincérité, mais aussi le honteux aveuglement du fanatisme toulousain. De crainte que cette *Déclaration* ne fût encore suspectée comme venant de ministres, on la fit certifier par les Syndics (signé : Lullin) et par le Résident de France, Baron de Montpeyroux. Elle fut suivie d'une déclaration de la République de Genève (c'est-à-dire des Syndics et Conseil) portant qu'à Genève ni la différence de culte ni le changement de religion ne rendaient qui que ce fût incapable de succéder.

#### DÉCLARATION

*de la Vénérable Compagnie des Pasteurs et Professeurs  
de l'Église et de l'Académie de Genève.*

Spectacle Delorme, avocat en cette ville, requis au nom d'un avocat étranger, de l'informer, s'il est vrai que ce soit un prin-

1. Voir : Pièces justificatives, XXII.



cipe admis dans notre Église, ou approuvé par un Synode tenu à Genève, qu'un père puisse faire mourir ses enfants, quand ils veulent changer de religion, s'est adressé à cette Compagnie, et l'a priée de donner à cet égard une Déclaration authentique des faits, sachant que notre Église est ouvertement accusée d'avoir un tel principe, et qu'il est essentiel, pour un cas très-grave, que la vérité sur ce point soit parfaitement connue.

Sur quoi opiné, chaque Membre de la Compagnie a témoigné l'horreur dont il avait été saisi, à l'ouïe d'une pareille imputation et son étonnement de ce qu'il se trouve des Chrétiens capables de soupçonner d'autres Chrétiens d'avoir des sentiments si odieux.

Cependant, puisque l'on croit nécessaire que la Compagnie s'explique sur une opinion si étrange, elle dit et déclare :

Qu'il n'y a jamais eu parmi nous, ni Synode, ni aucune assemblée qui ait approuvé cette doctrine abominable, qu'un père puisse ôter la vie à ses enfants, pour prévenir leur changement de Religion, ou pour les en punir ; que même jamais pareille question n'a été agitée, d'autant que de telles horreurs ne se présument point : que ni Calvin, ni aucun de nos Docteurs n'a jamais enseigné de semblable, ni même d'approchant, et que bien loin que ce soit la doctrine de notre Église, nous la détestons unanimement et l'abhorrons, comme également contraire à la nature et à la Religion chrétienne, et aux principes des Églises protestantes. *A Genève, le 29 janvier 1762.*

Expédié par ordre de la Compagnie des Pasteurs et Professeurs de l'Église et de l'Académie de Genève, au nom desquels et pour tous, ont signé

MAURICE, *Moderateur.*

LE COINTE, *Secrétaire.*

Mais ce n'était pas assez que les protestants étrangers répondissent à l'outrage d'un si affreux mensonge. Il fallut que ceux de France à leur tour se défendissent. L'entreprise n'était pas sans dangers. « Il est fâcheux, écrivait plus tard Audibert à Voltaire, que ceux des sujets du roy, qui par leur religion auraient un intérêt pressant et personnel de lever la voix... soient forcés par ménagement de rester dans le silence pour ne pas compromettre leur état. » Une voix hardie et vénérable osa parler pour eux.

Leur représentant le plus accrédité à cette époque était Paul Rabaut, l'illustre pasteur du désert, le père

Rabaut Saint-Étienne. Il vivait à Nîmes et dans les environs, depuis vingt-quatre ans, toujours exposé à la mort, et se dévouant sans ombre d'ostentation à son œuvre évangélique. Il publia *La Calomnie confondue ou Mémoire dans lequel on réfute une nouvelle accusation intentée aux protestants de la province du Languedoc, à l'occasion de l'affaire du sieur Calas détenu dans les prisons de Toulouse*; avec cette épigraphe : *S'ils ont appelé le père de Famille Béalzébuth, combien plus traiteront-ils ainsi ses domestiques?* Matth. 10. 25. — *Au Désert* 1762<sup>1</sup>.

Ce mémoire est remarquable ; il y règne une grande force et par moments une éloquence véritable. Mais déjà, il y a plusieurs années, en le lisant pour la première fois, j'avais été surpris d'y retrouver quelques traces de la déclamation à la mode ; tandis que le style de Paul Rabaut, qui m'est bien connu par ses manuscrits dont j'ai le dépôt, est toujours empreint d'un mérite très-éminent, devenu tout à fait habituel à cet homme admirable qui fut proscrit toute sa vie : je veux dire le calme, le bon sens pratique, ou plutôt un imperturbable sang-froid. L'historien des *Églises du Désert* avait partagé cette impression :

« Cet écrit, dit-il, le seul de tous ceux de Paul Rabaut où la conscience indignée s'exprime avec quelque colère, renferme des passages d'une haute éloquence<sup>2</sup>. »

L'explication de cette différence de ton et de style m'a été fournie par un document fort curieux que possède M. Maurice Angliviel, neveu d'Angliviel de la Beaumelle. C'est une *Lettre pastorale* écrite de la main de ce dernier, mais au nom d'un pasteur qui n'est pas désigné, en vingt-huit pages in-12, dont deux sont demeurées en blanc et avec la date du 1<sup>er</sup> dé-

1. Voir Bibliographie, n° 11. — 2. Tome II, p. 317.

cembre 1761, au Désert. Il est hors de doute que Rabaut a adopté, en l'abrégeant, ce travail deux fois plus long que sa brochure, y a joint un préambule beaucoup plus simple, et a développé davantage ce qui concerne un Synode qu'on prétendait avoir eu lieu récemment à Nîmes et où aurait été décidée la mise à exécution du règlement homicide qu'on prêtait à Calvin.

Parmi les améliorations que Rabaut fit subir au projet de la Beaumelle, deux surtout sont à noter, la réduction de l'écrit à la moitié de sa longueur et le changement d'une *Lettre pastorale*, nécessairement adressée aux seuls protestants, en un *Mémoire* adressé à tous et plus particulièrement à la justice.

Telle qu'elle existe, la *Calomnie confondue* est certainement supérieure à ce qu'elle aurait été si l'un ou l'autre de ses auteurs eût été seul à la rédiger. La Beaumelle est habitué à écrire pour le public, mais diffus et déclamateur, comme maint homme de lettres du dix-huitième siècle; Rabaut est simple et calme, mais un peu lourd, comme un homme d'action, plus accoutumé à braver les dangers qu'à cultiver l'art d'écrire, et qui enregistrait stoïquement<sup>1</sup> sur son carnet de poche, sans se permettre un mot d'attendrissement ou d'horreur, la date du martyre de ses collègues<sup>2</sup>.

1. *Egl. du Dés.*, t. II, p. 170.

2. On sait que La Beaumelle avait l'habitude de publier ses nombreux ouvrages sous des noms supposés et n'en a signé qu'un seul. L'année suivante, parut à Avignon, sous la fausse indication de Paris, son *Pré-servatif contre le déisme ou instruction pastorale de M. Dumont, ministre du Saint-Évangile, à son troupeau, sur le livre de M. J. Jacques Rousseau intitulé : Émile ou de l'éducation*. A Paris, 1763 (204 p. in-12). Ce livre fut dédié plus tard à Mme Nicol, une des sœurs de Gauthier Lavaysse, qui épousa La Beaumelle en secondes noces. L'ouvrage avait d'abord la forme d'une *Lettre pastorale* de Rabaut, mais il subit de grandes modifications que l'auteur, nous dit-on, regretta, et fut imprimé sur une copie écrite par le jeune Rabaut Saint-Étienne.

Je dois à M. Angliviel ces détails curieux, qu'il n'est pas inutile de mettre en regard de la collaboration de La Beaumelle au *Mémoire* de Paul Rabaut, fait jusqu'ici entièrement ignoré.

Le fragment suivant fera connaître l'esprit et l'accent de cette noble protestation :

« Ce qui nous a pénétré de la plus vive douleur, c'est qu'en lisant ce Monitoire, nous y avons vu qu'on suppose, comme un fait prouvé ou du moins probable, que l'assassinat du défunt avait été délibéré dans une assemblée de Religion et que ses Parents avaient été chargés de l'exécuter. Voilà donc nos Assemblées religieuses accusées, par un tribunal de justice, avec approbation de l'Official et sous les yeux d'une Cour souveraine, d'être une espèce de cabale où l'on délibère le parricide.

« On ne s'en est pas tenu là : on a publié que Calvin, dans son Institution, avait fait de cette Doctrine un point de Morale et de Foi. Enfin on a poussé les choses jusqu'à dire que nous avions tenu un Synode à Nîmes ou dans les environs, lequel avait décidé que les pères et mères sont obligés en conscience, et conséquemment doivent être exhortés, à ôter la vie à leurs enfants, plutôt que de leur permettre de quitter leur religion.

« Que de pareilles atrocités se répandissent parmi un peuple ignorant, et à l'égard d'une Société peu connue, on pourrait n'en être pas étonné : mais que, dans un siècle aussi éclairé que le nôtre, on charge de telles accusations une Eglise dont la créance est celle de la moitié de l'Europe ; que le magistrat y donne lieu par un Monitoire qui tend à nous rendre odieux : que les supérieurs ne répriment pas un si cruel attentat contre des citoyens que la loi ne distingue pas du reste des sujets, c'est presque nous livrer à la fureur d'une populace crédule.

« Nous ne le dissimulons point, c'est nous attaquer par l'endroit le plus sensible que de nous imputer de semblables horreurs. Que l'on confisque nos biens, qu'on nous envoie aux galères, qu'on attache nos ministres au gibet, qu'on nous rassasie d'opprobres et de supplices ; mais du moins qu'on respecte les maximes d'une morale qui n'a d'autre auteur que Jésus-Christ même. Qu'on nous punisse comme de mauvais raisonneurs, ou comme infracteurs de ces lois pénales que nous ne pouvons observer sans violer de plus augustes lois ; mais qu'on ne nous accuse pas d'être des pères dénaturés et de l'être en vertu des principes d'une religion toute sainte...

« On peut dire hardiment que ceux qui ont imaginé cette assemblée ne l'ont pas crue. S'ils l'avaient crue, l'auraient-ils énoncée dans un Monitoire ? En l'énonçant ne donnoient-ils pas avis aux coupables de prendre la fuite ? Aucun pourtant ne l'a prise. S'ils l'avoient seulement soupçonnée, n'auroient-ils pas fait des recherches secrètes ? n'auroient-ils pas craint d'éventer un mystère si important ? Quel a donc été leur but ? Il est difficile de leur en attribuer d'autre que celui de nous rendre odieux. L'ac-

cusation imputée contre Calvin est une impudence qui ne mérite pas de réponse. Les écrits de ce docteur ont fait l'admiration d'une partie du monde et le désespoir de l'autre : qu'on les lise et l'on verra que sa morale n'est autre que celle de l'Évangile. »

Rabaut envoya cette apologie des protestants de France au magistrat chargé de poursuivre les Calas, au procureur général Riquet de Bonrepos, avec une lettre qu'on trouvera plus loin.

On lit dans l'*Histoire des Églises du Désert* que la vivacité bien motivée de ces paroles, où l'auteur se départait de l'extrême modération ordinaire aux requêtes des protestants, fut blâmée par eux. Le pasteur Pierre Encontre trouvait les expressions « un peu fortes. » De la Broue, chapelain de l'ambassade de Hollande à Paris, écrivit à Rabaut avec plus de justesse, sous son pseudonyme d'*Euorbald* :

« Je trouve le mémoire bon, mais j'eusse improuvé, si j'avais été consulté, l'épigraphe <sup>1</sup>. On peut répondre avec vigueur, mais que l'esprit de douceur soit notre guide; éloignons tout ce qui sent la récrimination et l'aigreur <sup>2</sup>. »

1. Nous devons dire que dans le manuscrit de La Beaumelle cette épigraphe ne se trouve pas; mais ce manuscrit n'est qu'une ébauche évidemment destinée à être remaniée et complétée.

2. Une Revue anglaise très-connue, la *Westminster Review*, en rendant du présent ouvrage un compte bienveillant (octobre 1858), blâme très-vigoureusement les protestants de France, pour avoir désapprouvé la vivacité de leur défenseur en cette occasion, et pour l'avoir trouvé *trop sévère contre les meurtriers de Calas*, comme dit l'auteur. Puis s'armant contre les réformés français, des rudes censures de Saurin « à l'égard de ces *Nicodémites*, qui en ne s'expatriant point, avaient sacrifié leur conscience à leur intérêt, trahissaient leur Dieu et leurs frères, » l'écrivain anglais ajoute : « Je dirais plus tôt qu'ils étaient infidèles à eux-mêmes. » C'est là une critique au moins exagérée. On peut reprocher sans doute à un grand nombre de protestants, depuis François I<sup>er</sup> jusqu'à Louis XVI, d'avoir manqué souvent d'héroïsme; quelques-uns furent trop timides, sans doute, mais où vit-on jamais tout un peuple de héros, une multitude composée uniquement de martyrs intrépides et de victimes prêtes à tous les sacrifices? Le martyrologe du protestantisme français depuis Jacques Pauvant, brûlé à Paris en 1524 jusqu'à Jean Calas, les glorieux écrous de nos milliers de *Forçats pour la foi*, depuis le règne de Louis XIII jusqu'en 1775, les listes de prisonnières comme celles qui souffrirent sans faiblir dans l'hôpital général de Valence ou la Tour de Constance à

La colère des ennemis du protestantisme fut extrême. On s'offensa de voir paraître au grand jour la réclamation d'un pasteur proscrit, qui n'avait pas même d'existence légale, puisqu'il vivait sous la menace perpétuelle du supplice; et ce supplice avait été subi récemment par plusieurs de ses collègues; un autre, Rochette, devait le subir quelques semaines plus tard. On s'irrita d'une audace qui parut une énormité. On jugea nécessaire de réfuter publiquement l'écrit du pasteur par des *Observations sur un Mémoire qui paraît sous le nom de Paul Rabaut, intitulé la Calomnie confondue*. — 1762. L'auteur anonyme était l'abbé de Contezat. Il avait pris pour épigraphe cette phrase de saint Cyprien : *Nedum tacemus, non verecundiæ sed diffidentia causâ tacere videamur* : « De peur que, si nous nous taisions, notre silence ne fût attribué non à l'humilité mais à la confusion <sup>1</sup>. »

L'abbé de Contezat nous est inconnu. On a dit qu'il avait été appelé à Toulouse pour essayer de convertir le pasteur-martyr François Rochette et les trois gentilshommes exécutés avec lui le 19 février. On ajoutait que ses mœurs étaient très-mauvaises. Nous ne savons si ces allégations sont exactes; mais ce qui est incontestable c'est l'excès de violence et de noirceur qui d'un bout à l'autre anime cet écrit. Il ne s'agit plus ici de l'*esprit de douceur* qu'exigeait De la Broue, ni même des *récriminations* et de l'*aigreur* qu'il blâmait. Il s'agit de lancer contre des prisonniers et des proscrits les accusa-

Aiguesmortes, le nombre des pasteurs brûlés vifs ou pendus jusqu'en 1762, prouvent surabondamment que pour ne s'être point exilés, les fils des huguenots ne furent infidèles ni à Dieu, ni à leurs frères, ni à eux-mêmes. Et d'ailleurs, ignore-t-on que s'exiler était souvent une impossibilité absolue, que toutes les frontières étaient gardées, et qu'un des crimes pour lesquels on était condamné l'homme aux galères, la femme à la Tour de Constance, les enfants au couvent où on les faisait catholiques, était précisément d'avoir tenté en vain de sortir du royaume? Beaucoup crurent que leur conscience même les obligeait à rester; et si tous s'étaient exilés, n'est-il pas évident que la liberté religieuse et le protestantisme eussent été anéantis en France pour longtemps?

1. Bibliographie, n° 12.

tions les plus perfides, qui devaient, si elles étaient accueillies, les mener tous à l'échafaud.

Ainsi, l'auteur trouve naturel que les pasteurs soient soupçonnés (sans ombre de preuves) d'avoir ordonné l'assassinat de Marc-Antoine :

« On a pu légitimement supposer que le zèle cruel d'un pasteur protestant était enflammé par les suggestions de ceux qui se font les oracles et le soutien de la Religion prétendue Réformée. »

Voici le portrait de fantaisie qu'il trace de ces pasteurs ; voici comment il explique qu'il peut y avoir des protestants qui eux-mêmes ne connaissent pas les manières de sang pratiquées dans leur secte :

« Leur mauvaise foi leur fournit assez de moyens pour faire glisser le poison de leur fureur dans le cœur de certains de leurs disciples, disposés à le recevoir par caractère, par tempérament ou même par intérêt ; mais ces fanatiques se garderont bien de laisser apercevoir leur système de sang à ces Religionnaires dont la naissance a formé les sentiments, dont l'éducation a poli les mœurs, et qui ne sont attachés au Calvinisme que par indifférence et parce que cette religion n'impose aucune gêne. »

L'acharnement de l'abbé de Contezat contre les Calvinistes est plus grand encore que celui avec lequel il attaque les pasteurs. Voici un exemple où l'on verra à quel point une partialité éhontée peut tout défigurer :

« Si les sentiments de tristesse et d'effroi sur le sort d'un père qui remplira peut-être toute sa maison de sang, ne nous imposaient silence, nous rappellerions ici tant de propos prononcés avec fureur, d'un air menaçant, les yeux égarés, le visage en feu, combien de fois a-t-on entendu ces parents furieux rendre le Ciel complice de leur colère pour former des vœux homicides, dévouer leurs enfans catholiques à l'exécration la plus affreuse, et regarder leur retour à la vraie foi comme une défection déshonorante. N'a-t-on pas vu des Prélats et des Magistrats se réunir pour essuyer les larmes du fils, réprimer la douleur cruelle du père, et par des ménagements de prudence, ordonner une séparation aussi utile à la sûreté de l'un que nécessaire à la violence de l'autre ? »

Ce qu'il y a de plus curieux dans cet odieux libelle

c'est qu'il cite les passages de Calvin et de Luther sur lesquels on fondait l'accusation inouïe qui venait de surgir au bout de deux siècles contre leur mémoire et contre leurs Églises.

Voici d'abord le texte de Calvin. Nous n'avons pas besoin de faire observer qu'il n'y est pas question le moins du monde d'empêcher ou de punir le changement de religion, bien moins encore d'autoriser le meurtre des enfants par leurs pères. Il s'agit de commenter le commandement : *Tu honoreras ton père et ta mère*, dont la violation dans certaines circonstances était punie de la peine capitale chez les Juifs (Exode 21, 1. Lévit. 20, 9. Prov. 20, 20. Deut. 21, 18) comme, au reste, chez les Romains et d'autres peuples anciens.

« Tous ceux qui violent l'autorité paternelle, ou par mépris ou par rébellion, sont monstres et non pas hommes. Pourtant (c'est pourquoi) notre Seigneur commande de mettre à mort tous ceux qui sont désobéissants à père et à mère : et ce à bonne cause. Car puisqu'ils ne reconnoissent point ceux, par les moyens desquels ils sont venus en ceste vie, ils sont certes indignes de vivre. Or il appert par plusieurs passages de la loy ce que nous avons dict estre vray : à sçavoir que l'honneur dont il est ici parlé a trois parties : Reuerence, obeïssance et amour, procedant de la reconnoissance des bienfaits. La première est commandée de Dieu, quand il commande de mettre à mort celuy qui aura détracté de père et de mère, car en celà il punit tout contemnement et mépris. La seconde en ce qu'il a ordonné que l'enfant rebelle et désobeïssant fust aussi mis à mort... (Inst. L. 2. ch. 8. sect. 36.) »

On a le droit de trouver très-sévère cette législation de l'Ancien Testament qui punissait de mort les fils rebelles; mais il est trop évident qu'il n'y a aucune espèce de rapport entre la peine capitale prononcée dans ce cas, et l'ordre donné à des pères de tuer leurs enfants s'ils voulaient se faire catholiques. Court de Gébelin a parfaitement prouvé d'ailleurs qu'il n'existe aucune diffé-

1. *Toulousaines.*



rence entre les commentaires des protestants sur le texte et ceux des catholiques. Il a choisi pour cette démonstration les *Institutions* de Mgr de la Poype de Vitré, évêque de Poitiers, publiées en 1732 dans la ville épiscopale en 5 volumes in-12. On y trouve (t. I, p. 209-215) les mêmes textes de l'Ancien Testament cités et commentés de la même manière. Il serait très facile d'ajouter à cet exemple une multitude de citations analogues et de prouver que si la doctrine du parricide est dans Calvin, elle n'est pas moins chez une foule de théologiens catholiques, qui disent identiquement qu'il a dit. Catholiques et protestants ont eu longtemps le tort de ne pas comprendre que les lois des Juifs sont nullement applicables à la chrétienté, ni aux temps modernes.

Quant au passage très-violent tiré d'une lettre de Luther, on peut y voir à bon droit le souhait coupable d'une sorte de croisade ou expédition à main armée contre ceux qu'il appelle : *Hos magistros perditionis, Cardinales, hos Papas et totam istam Romanæ Sodomæ colorem, quæ Ecclesiam Dei sine fine corrumpit*<sup>1</sup>. Mais rien, «

1. *Si on pend les larrons au gibet, si on châtie les brigands avec glaive et les hérétiques par le feu, pourquoi n'attaquons-nous pas toutes nos forces ces maîtres de perdition, ces cardinaux, ces papes toute cette racaille de la Sodome romaine qui ne cesse de corrompre l'Eglise de Dieu? Pourquoi ne lavons-nous pas nos mains dans le sang? »*

Ces paroles affreuses, inexcusables, écrites dans un moment de colère, et conformes à la doctrine catholique sur le prétendu devoir imposé à la vraie Eglise de détruire l'hérésie, ne peuvent être plus vigoureusement réfutées que par d'autres, tout opposées, écrites par le même Luther.

On se souvient qu'en 1562 il s'agissait entre princes et États protestants de s'engager dans une alliance pour la défense de la Religion et de prendre les armes. Voici la réponse du Réformateur à cette proposition : « Nous ne pouvons en bonne conscience, ni conseiller, ni « prouver une semblable alliance, vu que si l'on venait à répandre « sang ou s'il en résultait du mal, nous aimerions mieux dix fois être « morts que de nous exposer au reproche d'avoir occasionné des désastres et du carnage par notre Évangile. Notre devoir est de souffrir « nous devons selon le prophète (Ps. 44-93) nous estimer comme «

tout ceci, ne ressemble à l'ordre d'étrangler les apostats par les mains de leurs pères. Il ne s'agit nullement de protestants convertis au catholicisme; et l'abbé, pour faire cadrer, tant bien que mal, sa citation avec son sujet, a perfidement omis dans sa traduction *les Maîtres de perdition, les Cardinaux et les Papes*, et s'est borné à traduire *cette racaille de la Sodome Romaine*. Sans cette omission, nul n'aurait pu songer à reconnaître Marc-Antoine Calas ou ses pareils, dans une énumération injurieuse des princes de l'Église de Rome; tandis que la phrase, ainsi abrégée, pouvait, à toute rigueur, paraître applicable aux prosélytes du catholicisme.

Ce n'est pas volontairement que l'abbé se contenta de citer Calvin et Luther d'une façon si peu probante. On dit que pendant quelques jours les livres protestants furent en grande réquisition à Toulouse; magistrats, prêtres, moines surtout (à cause de certaines bibliothèques de couvent, qui ont le privilège de posséder les livres hérétiques), cherchaient à l'envi dans ces livres les préceptes de sang qu'on espérait y trouver mais qu'on n'y trouva pas. Faute de mieux, il fallut se contenter de ces deux passages, absolument étrangers à la question.

L'indigne diatribe de l'abbé fut distribuée aux membres du Parlement, juges des Calas, par les soins du Procureur général <sup>1</sup>.

Quant au mémoire de Rabaut, ce magistrat le dénon-

« brebis envoyées à la boucherie.... » Plus loin on lit: « Nous ferons plus par nos prières et par nos supplications, que nos adversaires par leur fierté et leur vanterie; mais gardons-nous de souiller nos mains de sang et de violence. (Ed. Walch, t. IV, p. 564.) »

1. Il existe dans la collection de pièces réunies par Mme de la Beaumelle, née Lavaysse, une *Copie d'une lettre de M.... à M. Paul Rabaut*. C'est un projet de réponse à l'abbé de Contezat. Déjà un jeune licencié en théologie lui avait répliqué; mais il paraît que ces réfutations n'ont vu le jour ni l'une ni l'autre. Le neveu de la Beaumelle, M. Angliviel, pensait que *la lettre de M.... à M. P. Rabaut* était de son oncle. Il possédait aussi, en manuscrit, la réponse du licencié.

ça à la fois au Ministre par une lettre particulière et Parlement par un réquisitoire en forme. La réponse Ministre est extrêmement curieuse et les lettres éch<sup>3</sup>gées à ce même sujet par le chancelier de Lamoignon et M. de Saint-Priest, intendant du Languedoc, ne sont pas moins<sup>1</sup>. M. de Saint-Florentin craint quelque *secousse* si Paul Rabaut était arrêté (parce qu'il aurait fallu le rouer ou le pendre comme les autres ministres protestants). Le respect et le dévouement que s'é<sup>2</sup>attirés le pasteur du Désert rendaient son arrestation et son supplice dangereux. D'ailleurs, il avait pacifié contrée (comme le dit l'abbé de Contezat lui-même), après tout, l'on aimait encore mieux à Versailles profiter de son dévouement pour calmer et contenir ses <sup>3</sup>religionnaires que les exaspérer par sa mort. Aussi Ministre ordonne-t-il au Procureur général de présenter au Parlement un des exemplaires de la *Calomnie confondue* où le nom de Rabaut ne se trouvait point<sup>2</sup>, et d'éviter soigneusement que ce nom fût prononcé. A vrai dire ce que M. de Saint-Florentin aurait préféré, c'était que Rabaut quittât le pays; c'est dans l'espoir de l'y résoudre par la terreur qu'il consent aux poursuites projetées contre son Mémoire, autorisant même le Procureur général à le faire arrêter, *s'il a encore l'audace de se montrer* après ce décret, mais *en prenant de bonnes mesures pour prévenir toute secousse*.

Soit excès de zèle, soit qu'un des membres de la Cour eût prononcé le nom interdit, soit plutôt que la lettre du Ministre, qui est du 2 mars, ne lui fût point parvenue le 6, M. de Bonrepos nomma (jusqu'à six fois) Paul Rabaut dans ses réquisitoires, mais non dans le texte même de l'arrêt qui fut rendu à sa requête.

1. Voir : Pièces justif. xvii, xviii, xix.

2. Nous ne pensons pas qu'il en existe où son nom se trouve; moins en avons-nous eu plusieurs entre les mains, tous anonymes, Rabaut le dit lui-même dans le *Mémoire* qu'on lira plus loin.

Il se plaint de ce que Paul Rabaut prend le titre de Ministre du Saint-Évangile, de ce qu'il a osé dater son ouvrage du *Désert*, de ce qu'il prétend tous les protestants enveloppés dans l'accusation de quelques particuliers. — Le lecteur a pu juger si Rabaut avait tort de le prétendre.

Le Procureur général se plaint enfin de ce que l'auteur du *Mémoire* insulte à la religion en rapprochant la conduite des premiers chrétiens de celle des nouveaux prosélytes de la R. P. R.<sup>1</sup>. Ce que veut cet auteur séditieux, en bravant à la fois l'autorité séculière et l'autorité ecclésiastique, c'est préparer ceux dont il a surpris la confiance par ses déclamations, à redouter et cependant à mépriser toute autorité. On passe aisément du mépris à la révolte, et c'est le point de vue de cette foule de ministres obscurs qui n'attendent leur considération et leur fortune que du trouble et du désordre.

Tout ceci aboutit à une théorie complète du despotisme le plus illimité, au point de reléguer dans l'autre monde l'autorité de Dieu même pour tout laisser ici-bas à celle du roi, et cela sous prétexte d'une parole de Jésus-Christ :

Le royaume de Dieu n'est pas de ce monde ; il ne veut régner que sur les cœurs et les consciences ; il laisse aux rois de la terre un empire absolu sur les actes extérieurs de leurs sujets.

En conséquence, si F. Rochette vient d'être condamné à mort, ce n'est point comme mauvais raisonneur, mais comme séditieux et réfractaire aux ordres du roi.

Paul Rabaut écrivit immédiatement un nouveau *Mémoire* fort court, qu'il envoya au Procureur général et au Ministre, et qui n'a jamais été publié. Nous l'insérons tout entier, d'après l'exemplaire adressé à M. de

1. Rabaut avait dit avec raison que pour trouver un exemple d'une calomnie aussi inique, il fallait remonter jusqu'aux crimes fabuleux dont les chrétiens des premiers siècles étaient accusés par leurs persécuteurs.

Saint-Florentin et qui est de l'écriture de Rabaut Saint-Étienne (Arch. Imp.) Cette humble réclamation nous paraît un modèle de dignité, de simplicité et de modération. Jamais un innocent calomnié ne s'est plus noblement souvenu « qu'il était personne proscrire et qu'il fallait respecter les lois. »

### MÉMOIRE POUR PAUL RABAUT.

*(Sans indication de lieu ou de date, ni signature).*

C'est avec la plus vive douleur que le Sr Paul Rabaut apprend de toutes parts qu'il a eu le malheur d'indisposer contre lui premièrement Monsieur le Procureur général du Parlement de Toulouse, par la lettre qu'il a pris la liberté de lui écrire le 5<sup>e</sup> du mois de janvier, et par la qualité de ministre qu'il ajouta à sa signature ; et en second lieu le gouvernement, qui est informé de ces choses.

Si P. Rabaut avait pu prévoir que sa lettre et la manière dont il l'a signée pussent produire un pareil effet, assurément il n'aurait eu de sa part ni lettre, ni signature. Jamais il n'eut intention de provoquer ni les Magistrats ni le Gouvernement ; ceux qui le connaissent savent que c'est un sujet paisible, dont l'unique ambition est d'être utile à sa patrie, et qui, en plus d'une occasion, a donné les plus fortes preuves de son zèle pour le bien de l'État, de son attachement respectueux pour le Roi et de sa profonde vénération pour tous ceux à qui Sa Majesté confie une portion de son autorité. Il supplie très humblement qu'on lui permette d'exposer avec simplicité comment les choses se sont passées afin qu'on soit instruit des raisons de sa conduite. Si nonobstant ces raisons on persévère à le trouver coupable, gémissant de son malheur, il n'aura plus qu'à demander grâce pour une faute toute à fait involontaire.

On sait quelle horrible accusation a été intentée aux protestants du Bas-Languedoc ; on a voulu que, dans un synode, ils aient délibéré le parricide pour cause de religion. Ne point réfuter une calomnie aussi atroce, c'était l'accréditer. On fut donc obligé d'en montrer la fausseté, et c'est ce qui produisit le Mémoire qui a pour titre : *La Calomnie confondue*, etc.

Si P. Rabaut avait voulu faire ostentation de son titre, il l'aurait mis avec sa signature dans le Mémoire imprimé ; il n'en fit pourtant rien, se souvenant qu'il était personne proscrire et qu'il fallait respecter les lois.

Mais réfléchissant, d'un autre côté, qu'un Mémoire sans nom d'auteur n'aurait ni authenticité, ni force par conséquent, et que pour détruire la calomnie, il était nécessaire qu'on sût d'où par

Le **l**ettre Mémoire dont il s'agit et qu'il avait pour auteur un membre de ce Synode qu'on accusait d'une si grande énormité, P. Rabaut prit la liberté d'écrire à M. le Procureur général la lettre suivante dont il a gardé soigneusement copie :

« Monsieur,

« L'accusation qu'on a osé nous intenter est trop grave, elle a de trop dangereuses conséquences, pour ne pas en montrer la fausseté et même le ridicule. Nous l'avons fait dans le Mémoire que je prends la liberté de vous adresser. Nous espérons, Monsieur, de vos lumières et de votre équité, que vous voudrez bien en faire usage pour démasquer l'imposture et faire rendre justice à des hommes, à de bons citoyens, à de fidèles sujets. Je suis avec un profond respect, Monsieur, etc. »

Si cette lettre a, dans sa forme ou dans ses termes, quelque chose de peu respectueux pour le Magistrat auquel elle était adressée, P. Rabaut supplie de n'en chercher la cause que dans son ignorance des usages et du style qui doit être employé lorsqu'on s'adresse aux grands. Vivant dans les déserts, il a pu ignorer les formules usitées dans le monde; mais, pénétré du plus profond respect pour toutes les personnes constituées en dignité et particulièrement pour les ministres des lois, il proteste que son cœur n'a point eu de part à l'offense. S'il ajoute à sa signature la qualité de Ministre, c'est, d'un côté, qu'il ne savait point être connu de M. le Procureur général et que, de l'autre, ayant trouvé dans un calendrier de Toulouse le nom d'un avocat parfaitement conforme au sien, il crut nécessaire de ne point compromettre cet avocat qu'il ne connaît point, et de prendre sur lui tous les risques, s'il y en avait à courir.

On le réitère : si cette courte apologie ne suffit pas pour disculper P. Rabaut, il gémit sur une faute involontaire et sur son état de proscription qui s'oppose au désir qu'il a de l'expier, en donnant les preuves les plus authentiques de sa douleur sincère; il suppliera le gouvernement de lui faire grâce et de ne pas douter de la pureté de ses intentions et du désir qu'il a d'être utile à sa patrie.

Malgré cette humble et ferme défense, la Cour condamna « ledit écrit à être lacéré et brûlé au bas du perron du palais, par l'exécuteur de la Haute Justice. » Elle ordonna de plus, mais sans désigner Rabaut, qu'il serait informé « contre tous ceux qui ont composé, écrit, imprimé, distribué ou débité ledit libelle. »

Le 8 mars, en effet, à l'issue de l'audience, en présence de Joseph-Guillaume Gravier, greffier garde-sacs

de la Cour, le bourreau brûla l'écrit de Rabaut dans la cour du palais de justice.

Loyseau de Mauléon a écrit, page 36 de son *Fatum*<sup>1</sup>, que Jean Calas, en traversant la cour du Palais pour subir un interrogatoire, aperçut le bourreau le bûcher, crut voir les apprêts de son supplice et troubla. Il ajoute que ses réponses se ressentirent de ce trouble et peut-être contribuèrent à le faire condamner. Toute cette anecdote, répétée par Voltaire et d'autres, nous paraît fautive; ni à Paris, ni à Toulouse nous n'avons pu découvrir aucune trace d'interrogatoire, confrontation ni recolement à la date du 8 mai. D'ailleurs Loyseau de Mauléon ne parle que d'un écrit calviniste, sans signaler celui de Rabaut; il est vrai qu'un rapport plus exactement cet écrit condamné, eût été peut-être une maladresse.

Cette condamnation et l'ordre donné d'informer contre les auteurs, distributeurs, etc., firent naître, parmi les protestants de France, les plus vives craintes pour un homme qui était leur véritable chef, aimé et vénéré de tous<sup>2</sup>. On s'en émut aussi à l'étranger, et de divers côtés on s'empressa d'offrir au pasteur du Désert un asile et des moyens d'existence. Il reçut à cette occasion des propositions honorables de Genève, de Lausanne, de Copenhague, d'Altona; il refusa tout et continua, redoublant de précautions, son existence de proscrit.

1. Voir : Bibliographie.

2. « Chacun craignait pour Paul. » (Rapport d'Alison au duc de Fitz-James, déjà cité, en date du 2 avril.) — On sait que les pasteurs proscrits cachaient leur nom; Rabaut vit encore dans la mémoire du peuple protestant du Languedoc, sous son prénom de *Monsieur Paul*. Le nom vulgaire de la rue de Nîmes, qu'il habita pendant ses dernières années, est encore aujourd'hui celui de *Rue de Monsieur Paul*; il est regrettable qu'une administration timide ait changé à dessein cette désignation historique en celle de rue *Grétry*, sous prétexte du voisinage du Théâtre



## CHAPITRE X.

### TORTURE ET SUPPLICE DE JEAN CALAS.

« On lui jette (au bourreau) un empoisonneur, un paricide, un sacrilège; il le saisit, il l'étend, il le lie sur une croix horizontale, il lève le bras : alors il se fait un silence horrible, et l'on n'entend plus que le cri des os qui éclatent sous la barre, et les hurlements de la victime. Il la détache; il la porte sur une roue, les membres fracassés s'enlacent dans les rayons; la tête pend; les cheveux se hérissent, et la bouche, entrouverte comme une fournaise, n'envoie plus, par intervalle, qu'un petit nombre de paroles sanglantes qui appellent la mort. »

Le comte Joseph de MAISTRE,  
*Soirées de St. Pétersbourg, 1<sup>er</sup> E.*

Élie de Beaumont<sup>1</sup> rapporte qu'au moment où les juges allaient prononcer leur sentence, on fit courir le bruit d'un projet d'évasion des accusés; aussitôt leurs gardes furent doublées; pendant la nuit, des lanternes allumées furent placées sur le toit des prisons; une cloche qui répondait au logis du geôlier fut suspendue au corps de garde. D'autres rumeurs plus étranges encore se répandirent; on prétendit que les accusés avaient voulu se tuer; la servante Viguière s'étant trouvée mal un jour, jusqu'à demeurer sans connaissance, on la crut morte et empoisonnée; la nouvelle

1. E. de B., 3.



en fut portée à la Chambre de la Tournelle qui siégeait en ce moment et qui envoya immédiatement un des conseillers s'assurer du fait.

Je rapporte ces derniers bruits sous toutes réserves, n'ayant aucun moyen d'en vérifier l'exactitude. Ils ne prouveraient que l'angoisse croissante des prévenus et le zèle ardent des juges.

Il fut décidé que Calas père serait jugé seul avant tous les autres ; on espérait obtenir de lui, soit par la torture, soit sur l'échafaud, des aveux qui permettraient de condamner ses complices.

L'arrêt ne fut prononcé qu'au bout de *dix grandes séances*<sup>1</sup>. Des treize juges, sept opinèrent immédiatement pour la mort, trois pour la torture seulement (se réservant ainsi de voter la mort plus tard, s'il y avait lieu) ; deux furent d'avis qu'on vérifiât avant tout s'il était possible ou non que Marc-Antoine se fût pendu entre les deux battants de la porte, avec le billot et la corde qui étaient au greffe. Un seul se déclara pour l'acquittement.

Ne semble-t-il pas prodigieux qu'on ait refusé l'examen de fait, demandé par deux juges ? Conçoit-on de nos jours un tribunal passant outre à une condamnation capitale, quand deux ou trois de ses membres demandent une vérification qui n'eût pas exigé une demi-heure ? Le parti pris et la légèreté furent-ils jamais plus évidents ?

Malgré la majorité de 7 voix sur 13, Calas n'était pas condamné encore ; cette majorité, d'après la loi, était insuffisante pour une sentence capitale. Après un débat prolongé, ce fut, dit-on, le doyen des conseillers, M. de Bojal, qui, en se joignant aux 7 voix déjà obtenues, rendit l'arrêt de mort exécutoire. On l'avait cru favorable aux Calas.

1. Lettre du président de Senaux. (Pièces justif. xx.)

L'arrêt portait 1° que Calas subirait la question ordinaire et extraordinaire « pour tirer de lui l'aveu de son crime, complices et circonstances; » « 2° qu'étant en chemise, tête et pieds nus, il serait conduit dans un chariot, des prisons du palais à la cathédrale, et que là devant la porte principale, étant à genoux, « tenant en ses mains une torche de cire jaune allumée du poids de deux livres, » l'exécuteur de la haute justice « lui fera faire amende honorable et demander pardon à Dieu, au roi et à la justice de ses méfaits; » 3° l'ayant remonté sur ledit chariot, l'exécuteur le conduira à la place Saint-Georges <sup>1</sup> où, sur un échafaud, « il lui rompra et brisera bras, jambes, cuisses et reins; » 4° il le portera sur une roue et l'y couchera le visage tourné vers le ciel, « pour y vivre en peine et repentance de ses dits crimes et méfaits et servir d'exemple et donner de la terreur aux méchants, tout autant qu'il plaira à Dieu de lui donner de vie <sup>2</sup>. »

Cette sentence, qui serait très-cruelle, quand il s'agirait d'un véritable assassin, fut prononcée contre Jean Calas le 9 mars et exécutée dans tous ses affreux détails le lendemain.

Nous croyons devoir insérer ici le procès-verbal de cette hideuse boucherie, tel que le signa un homme que nous devons nous attendre à retrouver sur l'échafaud de sa victime, David de Beaudrigue. Ce procès-verbal est un monument historique d'une haute valeur, parce que l'innocence du condamné y éclate à chaque instant, à travers les ruses de ses interrogateurs et l'atrocité de ses tourments <sup>3</sup>.

1. Note 18 à la fin du volume. — 2. Note 19, *ibid.*

3. Ce procès-verbal, abrégé de moitié, a été publié par M. Frédéric Thomas, avocat à la Cour impériale, dans les *Petites Causes célèbres du jour*, n° 7, en juillet 1855, et inséré dans le journal *la Presse* le 2 août suivant. Nous avons collationné ce document sur l'acte authentique conservé aux *Archives*, et nous avons non-seulement rétabli ce qui manquait dans l'abrégé imprimé, mais reproduit le style et jusqu'à l'orthographe

## PROCÈS-VERBAL D'EXÉCUTION DE JEAN CALAS PÈRE.

« L'AN mil sept cent soixante-deux et le dixième jour du m<sup>ars</sup> de mars après-midy, par devant nous, noble François-Raym<sup>ond</sup> David de Beaudrigue et M. Leonard Daignan de Sendal, ca<sup>pitouls</sup> tous, dans le grand consistoire les plaids tenant, a été emm<sup>en</sup> par l'exécuteur de la haute justice le nommé Jean Calas pè<sup>re</sup> accusé du crime d'homicide par luy commis sur la personne Marc-Antoine Calas, son fils aîné, lequel, tête, pieds nus, chemise, ayant la hard au col, et étant à genoux, M. de Pij<sup>on</sup> avocat du roy, a dit que le procès ayant été fait, tant de no<sup>us</sup> autorité que celle de la souveraine cour de parlement, à sa quête et à celle de M. le procureur général, pour cas de cri<sup>me</sup> d'homicide contre ledit Jean Calas père et autres, ladite sou<sup>veraine</sup> raine cour de parlement, par son arrêt, rendu le neuvième courant en la chambre Tournelle, a condamné ledit Calas pè<sup>re</sup> faire amende honorable devant la porte principale de l'égl<sup>ise</sup> Saint-Etienne de Toulouse, et à être conduit ensuite à la pla<sup>ce</sup> Saint-Georges, et sur un échafaud qui à cet effet y sera dres<sup>sé</sup> ledit Calas père y sera rompu vif et ensuite expiré sur une ro<sup>ue</sup> qui sera dressée tout auprès dudit échafaud, la face tournée ve<sup>rs</sup> le ciel, pour y vivre en peine et repentance de ses dits crime<sup>s</sup> méfaits, tout autant qu'il plaira à Dieu de lui donner la vie, e<sup>t</sup> son corps mort jeté ensuite dans un bûcher ardent préparé à ce<sup>l</sup> effet sur ladite place, pour y être consommé et ensuite les cen<sup>dres</sup> dres jetées au vent; préalablement, ledit Calas père avoir été appliqué à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire; le condam<sup>né</sup> en outre à cent sols d'amende envers le Roy, déclare ses biens confisqués et acquis à qui de droit, distrait la troisième partie d'iceux pour sa femme et ses enfans, s'il en a, et aux dépens en<sup>vers</sup> vers ceux qui les ont exposés. Et pour faire mettre ledit arrêt à exécution contre ledit Calas père, ladite cour renvoie devant nous, nous commettant quant à ce. Et attendu que ledit Calas père est présent, requiert qu'il soit tout présentement fait lec<sup>ture</sup> ture par notre greffier du susdit arrêt; et a signé, de Pijon, avo<sup>cat</sup> cat du Roy.

« SUR QUOY, nous dits capitouls, faisant droit sur les réquisi<sup>tions</sup> tions du procureur du Roy, ordonnons qu'il sera tout présente<sup>ment</sup> ment fait lecture par notre greffier du susdit arrêt.

« APRÈS QUOY, ledit procureur du Roy a de nouveau requis que, demeurant la lecture qui vient d'être faite du susdit arrêt, icelui soit exécuté contre ledit Calas père, suivant la forme et teneur, ce qui a été par nous ainsi ordonné.

de l'original. Il nous a paru important de lui laisser toute la froideur technique et barbare du langage officiel.

« Et tout incontinent ledit Calas père ayant été conduit de notre ordre par l'exécuteur de la haute justice dans la chambre de la question, Pardevant nous susdits capitouls, accompagnés de M<sup>r</sup> Labat, notre assesseur, commissaire en cette partie, et de notre greffier, ledit Calas père ayant été mis sur le bouton de la question ordinaire, nous lui avons représenté que, par la lecture de l'arrêt qu'il vient d'entendre, il est condamné à mort, préalablement avoir été appliqué à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire, qu'il voit qu'il n'a que très-peu de temps à vivre, et des tourmens à souffrir; ce qui doit l'obliger, pour la décharge de sa conscience, de nous répondre et dire vérité, en nous déclarant ses crimes et méfaits, ensemble ses complices; et à l'instant, de notre mandement, ledit Calas père, la main levée à la passion figurée de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ, a promis et juré de dire vérité.

« Et de suite avons enjoint, tant à l'exécuteur de haute justice qu'à ses gardes et valets, de sortir de la dite chambre; et, iceux retirés, avons encore représenté audit Calas père qu'il ne peut, sans violer le serment qu'il vient de prêter, se dispenser de répondre ingénument, sans détour et sans équivoque, aux interrogats que nous allons lui faire; qu'en déguisant la vérité, ses peines et tourmens seront redoublés.

INTERROGÉ de son nom, surnom, âge, qualité, demeure et de sa profession,

RÉPOND s'appeler Jean Calas père, marchand, âgé de soixante-quatre ans, être marié et avoir des enfants.

INTERROGÉ avec qui il étoit en relation avec son commerce et quelles sont les maisons qu'il fréquentoit dans cette ville, comment s'appellent les personnes qu'il connoît et avec qui il commerçoit,

RÉPOND qu'il étoit en relation avec les sieurs Tissié, Cazeing, Francés et autres marchands.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai que luy et sa femme ont vécu jusques icy dans la religion prétendue réformée et ont élevé leurs enfants dans la religion prétendue réformée,

RÉPOND et avoue l'Interrogatoire.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai qu'il fréquentoit souvent le sieur Cazeing, logé à la place de la Bourse, s'il ne se rendoit souvent chez luy, en compagnie de qui il sy rendoit,

RÉPOND et dit qu'il se rendoit quelquefois chez ledit Cazeing en visite et avec le sieur Tissié et quelquefois avec le sieur de Serres, marchand.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai que le treize du mois d'octobre dernier Lavaysse soupa chez luy,

RÉPOND et avoue l'Interrogatoire.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai qu'ils soupèrent tous ensemble, avec

sa famille composée de Jean Pierre Calas, son fils, Marc Antoine Calas, son autre fils, Lavaisse, et la femme du répondant,

RÉPOND et avoue l'Interrogatoire.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai que Lavaisse l'avoit été voir l'après-midy et qu'ils sortirent ensemble, en attendant l'heure du souper, où est-ce qu'ils furent, ou si Lavaisse sortit avec Jean Pierre Calas, son fils cadet et à quelle (heure) est-ce qu'ils rentrèrent ?

RÉPOND qu'il ne sortit point avec ledit Lavaisse, mais que Jean Pierre Calas, son fils cadet, sortit avec ledit Lavaisse et qu'ils rentrèrent de sept à sept heures un quart.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai que dès que Lavaisse, son fils Jean Pierre, et luy qui répond furent rentrés, il ne fit fermer à verrouil la porte de la rue, et que personne plus n'entra chez luy jusqu'à l'heure du souper,

RÉPOND et dit qu'il étoit dans son appartement lorsque son fils se retira avec Lavaisse et qu'ils fermèrent la porte, sans savoir (sans qu'il sache) si c'étoit à verrouil ou comment, et qu'il n'étoit dans l'usage de la fermer à verrouil que lorsqu'ils allaient se coucher.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai qu'il fût averty l'après-midy<sup>1</sup> que son fils Marc Antoine devoit changer de religion,

RÉPOND et dénie l'Interrogatoire, et personne ne luy en a jamais parlé.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai qu'à raison de ce, il forma le dessein de l'étrangler de concert avec Lavaisse, son fils Jean Pierre, la femme de luy qui repond et sa servante,

RÉPOND et dénie l'Interrogatoire, et dit qu'ils n'ont jamais formé des projets aussi exécrables.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai qu'il a toujours vexé ses enfants à raison de ce, et notamment celui qui s'est rendu à la religion catholique, qu'il l'avoit enfermé dans la cave et d'où M. Barbenegre, curé de Saint-Etienne, alla le retirer,

RÉPOND qu'il n'a jamais vexé aucun de ses enfants à raison de la religion catholique et que M. Barbenegre n'a jamais été chez luy<sup>2</sup>.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai que, continuant ses vexations et ayant été instruit le treize dans l'après midy que son fils Marc Antoine devoit changer et embrasser la religion catholique, il ne forma le dessein de l'étrangler,

RÉPOND et dénie l'Interrogatoire dans tout son entier.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai que le même soir qu'il donna à souper

1. On avait donc renoncé à prétendre que Marc-Antoine étoit déjà condamné depuis plusieurs jours et que Lavaysse avait été mandé de Bordeaux pour l'exécution.

2. Le fait eût été facile à vérifier.

**A** Gaubert Lavaisse fils, du moment qu'ils furent rentrés chez **Luy** avec Jean Pierre Calas son fils, Lavaisse et luy qui repond et **sa** femme ne se quitterent pas, de même que la servante,

**Répond** et accorde l'Interrogatoire et dit que la servante passa **seulement** a la cuisine et qu'ils se mirent a table en entrant et **qu'ils** ne se quitterent pas du tout, ni avant ni apres le souper.

**INTERROGÉ** s'il n'est vray qu'ils concurent dès ce moment tous **ensemble** le projet d'étrangler ledit Marc Antoine Calas, ou si **c'est** luy seul qui repond qui commit le crime dont il s'agit,

**Répond** et dit qu'il n'a point eu ce dessein ni en famille ni en **seul**.

**INTERROGÉ** s'il n'est vray qu'ils ont exécuté tous ensemble ce projet, ou luy seul ce noir attentat, si c'est avant ou après le souper que Marc-Antoine Calas a été étranglé ?

**Répond** et dit qu'ils ne l'ont pas fait, ni luy qui repond, et qu'ils l'ont trouvé pendu après souper, quand Lavaisse descendit pour **se retirer**.

**INTERROGÉ** s'il n'est vray que Marc Antoine Calas soupa avec eux,

**Répond** et avoue l'Interrogatoire.

**INTERROGÉ** s'il n'est vray que le cadavre de Marc Antoine Calas son fils fut trouvé étendu à terre dans la boutique en chemise, son habit plié sur le comptoir avec son chapeau,

**Répond** qu'ils le trouverent pendu sur les deux battants de la porte du magasin, déniaut le surplus de l'Interrogatoire.

**Luy** avons représenté qu'il ne dit pas la vérité, nous ayant dit dans son precedent<sup>1</sup> Interrogatoire qu'on l'avoit trouvé étendu mort a terre au même endroit ou nous le trouvâmes lors de notre transport,

**Répond** et dit que lors de son audition d'office, il est vray qu'il dit qu'on avoit trouvé ledit Marc Antoine Calas son fils, étendu mort entre la boutique et le magasin ; et dans son second interrogatoire, voulant dire la vérité, il dit qu'ils le trouvèrent suspendu sur les deux battants de la porte du magasin et qu'à l'égard de l'habit et du chapeau, il ne s'aperçut pas ou il étoit, dans le grand trouble ou il étoit.

**INTERROGÉ** s'il n'est vray que c'est dans la chambre ou ils souperent qu'ils étranglerent ledit Marc Antoine, ou si c'est dans la boutique avec le billot dont s'agit, qui fut trouvé derrière la porte et la corde qui fut trouvée derrière le comptoir et le tout reconnu par luy qui repond,

**Répond** et dit que ni les uns ni les autres ne l'ont point étranglé en aucun endroit, ayant reconnu dans ses précédents Interrogatoires ledit billot et ladite corde.

1. Ceci est de mauvaise foi ; ce n'était pas dans le précédent interrogatoire ; c'était dans le premier de tous, et avant l'écrou.

INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vray que luy qui repond a avoué dans ses précédents Interrogatoires que Marc Antoine Calas fils avoit resté encore demy heure après le souper dans le salon de compagnie,

RÉPOND qu'il avoit dit par erreur que Marc Antoine avoit resté demy heure dans la chambre, ayant pris Jean Pierre pour Marc Antoine.

Luy avons représenté qu'il paroît impossible que ledit Marc Antoine eût resté demy heure dans ladite chambre, comme il l'avoit avoué cy devant, puisque son cadavre fut trouvé à onze heures et demy entre la boutique et le magasin et à terre, froid ;

RÉPOND et dit avoir suffisamment repondu dans son précédent Interrogatoire.

INTERROGÉ s'il a d'autres complices que ceux qui sont dénommés dans la procedure,

RÉPOND qu'étant innocent il n'a point des complices.

MIEUX exhorté à dire la verité, a dit l'avoir dite.

LECTURE à luy faite de son présent Interrogatoire, il y a persisté ; requis de signer, a dit ne pouvoir.

APRÈS QUOY nous susdits capitouls, ayant fait rentrer dans laditte chambre de la question ledit exécuteur de la haute justice, ses gardes et valets, et après leur avoir fait prêter le serment, leurs mains levées à la passion figurée de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ, ont promis et juré de bien et fidèlement remplir les fonctions de leur employ, conformément audit arret et de ne pas révéler le secret, et ledit Calas père ayant été remis entre les mains dudit exécuteur de la haute justice, nous l'avons fait appliquer, en conformité dudit arrêt, et en la forme ordinaire, au premier bouton de la question, les gardes menant le tour, les valets tenant les cordes et l'exécuteur ayant ses pieds sur le bouton attaché au fer des pieds dudit Calas <sup>1</sup>.

Et ayant été élevé,

INTERROGÉ s'il a commis ce crime seul et si son fils, Lavaisse et sa femme y ont contribué,

RÉPOND que ni luy qui repond ni personne n'a commis ce crime.

Et ayant fait descendre ledit Calas, et luy ayant réytéré les mêmes interrogatoires cy dessus,

RÉPOND et dit avoir dit la vérité.

Et ayant remonté au second bouton,

INTERROGÉ de nouveau s'il a commis ce crime seul, (ou si) son fils, Lavaisse, sa femme y ont contribué,

RÉPOND que personne ne l'a commis.

ET DE SUITE avons de nouveau représenté audit Calas que les tourments qu'il doit souffrir encore sont bien plus grands que

1. Voir, sur la torture, la note 19 à la fin du volume.

ceux qu'il a déjà soufferts, qu'il ne vient d'être détaché que pour tout de suite être attaché sur le banc de la question extraordinaire, qu'il peut cependant en diminuer la rigueur en disant la vérité en ses réponses aux interrogats que nous allons continuer de luy faire.

**INTERROGÉ** s'il n'est vrai que lui qui répond a commis le crime seul; si son fils, Lavaisse, sa femme y ont contribué, et si les susnommés et la servante le savoient,

**RÉPOND** et persiste que personne n'a commis ce crime et qu'ils sont innocens.

**APRÈS QUOY** avons remis ledit Calas entre les mains des révérends pères Bourges<sup>1</sup>, docteur royal de l'Université, et Caldaigués, professeur en théologie, des frères prêcheurs, pour l'exhorter.

Et ensuite, et demy heure après, nous avons fait attacher ledit Calas sur le banc, pour être appliqué à la question extraordinaire.

Et ledit Calas ayant été de nouveau par nous interrogé s'il n'a commis ce crime pour fait de Religion, s'il n'étoit instruit ou soubçonnoit le changement de son fils, s'il l'a fait avant ou après souper, et s'il a billotté ou pendu Marc Antoine Calas,

**RÉPOND** et dénie l'Interrogatoire, et qu'il n'a point des complices.

Et de suite cinq cruchets d'eau ayant été versés en la forme ordinaire, et après avoir fait découvrir le visage dudit Calas,

**INTERROGÉ** s'il persiste dans ses réponses,

**RÉPOND** qu'il y persiste.

Et ayant fait verser cinq autres cruchets d'eau et ayant fait découvrir le visage dudit Calas,

**INTERROGÉ** s'il persiste dans ses réponses au dernier interrogatoire à luy fait,

**RÉPOND** qu'il y persiste, et qu'il est innocent, de même que les autres accusés.

**INTERROGÉ** encore en quel endroit il a commis le crime, et s'il ne descendit après Marc Antoine Calas dans la boutique, et si cette mort n'avoit pas été décidée, et où on l'a délibérée,

**RÉPOND** qu'il persiste a soutenir qu'il est innocent.

**APRÈS QUOY**, ledit Calas ayant été détaché du banc et remis entre les mains des Révérends Pères pour l'entendre en confession et l'exhorter a bien mourir;

Et Monsieur Gouazé, capitoul second de justice, étant survenu dans le temps qu'on finissoit la torture de la question, Mon-

1. Il paraît que ce P. Bourges, dont il sera question encore plus d'une fois, est le même qui a été désigné plus haut sous le nom de P. Bourgis. Prononcés avec l'accent languedocien, ces noms sont moins différents qu'en français.



sieur Daignan du Sendal, capitoul, s'étant retiré; le présent verbal a été signé par Mons<sup>r</sup> du Sendal avant que Mons<sup>r</sup> de Gouazé ne continuât les opérations qui restent à faire. David de Beaudrigue, capitoul; Daignan du Sendal, capitoul; Labat, assesseur; de Pijon, avocat du Roy, signés.

ET QUELQUE temps après, nous ayant été dit que ledit Calas père étoit disposé à mourir, il auroit été monté sur le chariot à ce destiné, et ensuite conduit, par le cours accoutumé, au devant la porte principale de l'église Saint-Etienne, où l'ayant fait descendre dudit chariot, il y a fait l'amende honorable portée par ledit arrêt.

Et, ce fait, a été conduit à la place Saint-Georges, lieu destiné pour ladite exécution; l'avons fait descendre dudit chariot et asseoir au bas de l'échelle dressée à l'échafaud, où nous luy avons fait lecture desdits interrogatoires et réponses cy-dessus, et l'avons ensuite interpellé de nous déclarer s'il y a dit la vérité, et s'il y persiste ou s'il a quelque chose à déclarer à la justice pour la décharge de sa conscience,

LEQUEL dit Calas a répondu qu'il persiste dans ses précédentes réponses, et qu'il mourait innocent.

Luy avons de suite représenté que, quoyque innocent, il pouvoit du moins savoir quels étoient les auteurs du meurtre commis sur la personne de Marc Antoine Calas;

RÉPOND qu'il n'en connoît point.

Et de suite l'exécuteur l'ayant monté sur ledit échafaud<sup>1</sup>, et après qu'il l'a eu couché et attaché sur la forme de croix, ledit Calas a été rompu vif, en conformité du susdit arrêt, et ce fait, ledit exécuteur de la haute justice l'a exposé sur la roue qui étoit dressée à côté dudit échafaud, la face tournée vers le ciel, où ledit Calas a resté en vie pendant deux heures précises; et ensuite, de notre ordre et en conformité du retentum<sup>2</sup>, ledit Calas a été étranglé jusqu'à ce que mort naturelle s'en est ensuivie, et son corps mort a été jetté dans le bûcher ardent, en conformité du susdit arrêt, et icelluy été exécuté suivant sa forme et teneur.

« Et en autres actes n'a été par nous procédé, et nous sommes retirés, et en conséquence avons de tout ce (que) dessus dressé le présent verbal, que nous avons signé avec ledit M<sup>e</sup> Labat, commissaire, ledit M<sup>e</sup> de Pijon, avocat du Roy, requérant, et notre

1. « Il monta sur l'échafaud d'un air tranquille, regardant avec la même tranquillité le public innombrable qui y était présent. » Extrait d'une lettre écrite le 13, par M. Poirson à M. Freidier, et qui nous a été communiquée par M. E. Barre.

2. On appelait ainsi un article secret de la sentence. Le texte de l'arrêt porte qu'il « vivra en peine et repentance tout autant qu'il plaira à Dieu de lui donner la vie; » le *retentum*, « qu'après avoir resté deux heures sur la roue, il sera étranglé jusqu'à ce que mort naturelle s'en suive. »

greffier : Gouazé, capitoul ; David de Beaudrigue, capitoul ; Labat, assesseur ; de Pijon, avocat du Roy ; Michel DieuLafoy, greffier, signés.

Collationné

Signé : BARRAU, greff.

Voici encore un récit de cette mort par un personnage hostile et officiel :

« Calas a souffert son supplice avec une fermeté inconcevable. Il ne jeta qu'un seul cri à chaque coup que l'exécuteur lui donna sur l'échafaud. Pendant deux heures qu'il resta sur la roue, il s'entretint avec le confesseur de choses étrangères à la religion, après avoir déclaré que tout ce qu'il pourrait lui dire à ce sujet était inutile ; qu'il voulait mourir protestant. Une des jambes qu'on lui avait cassées n'ayant pu être repliée sur la roue, il pria le confesseur d'avertir l'exécuteur de remonter sur l'échafaud parce qu'il sentait des tiraillements qui lui causaient de vives douleurs ; et le confesseur, qui était le professeur de théologie des Jacobins, lui procura ce soulagement. »

(AMBLARD, subdélégué, à M. de St-Priest.  
*Arch. de Montpellier.*)

Nous savons par la lettre de M. Poirson à M. Freidier quels sont les objets étrangers à la religion dont Calas parla au Père Bourges ; il demanda à ce moine s'il n'avait pas froid, et ajouta que, pour lui, il éprouvait une impression de froid très-vive. Il le supplia ensuite de recommander qu'on ne le jetât pas, vivant encore, dans les flammes, ce que le Père Bourges lui promit.

Est-il nécessaire d'insister sur tout ce qu'il y a de touchant et d'admirable dans les derniers moments de ce martyr ? On a pu remarquer à quel degré d'épuisement l'âge, les souffrances morales et l'approche de la torture avaient réduit les forces physiques de ce vieillard si ferme encore d'intelligence et de cœur. Il répondit avec une présence d'esprit, une force d'âme que rien ne put abattre ; mais, au moment d'être appliqué à la torture, il déclara ne pouvoir signer. A l'amende honorable, il dit qu'il faisait de grand cœur le sacrifice de sa vie, mais qu'il mourait innocent du crime qu'on lui imputait.

Dans l'affreux dialogue entre le patient et ses juges, il est facile de reconnaître, d'un côté, une erreur qui cherche en vain à se légitimer et à laquelle aucune tentative ne réussit; de l'autre, la vérité sans cesse reproduite, et jusqu'au sein des plus effroyables douleurs par une conscience droite et sans reproche.

Au pied de l'échafaud, le Père Bourges le pressant d'avouer, il s'écria d'un ton de reproche : « Quoi donc, mon père, vous aussi, vous croyez qu'on peut tuer son fils? »

En traversant les rues sur la fatale charrette, la vue de ce vieillard brisé par la torture, sa simplicité, son courage, sa tranquillité d'âme, émurent la foule. Il disait au peuple : *Je suis innocent.*

Un seul cri lui échappa aux onze coups de barre de fer dont chacun brisa un de ses os. Enfin commença la dernière partie de son supplice; on a vu qu'après la double torture et après qu'il eut été rompu vif, son corps tout brisé fut attaché sur la roue, où il vécut encore deux heures, la face tournée vers le ciel. Pendant cette longue agonie il ne proféra pas un murmure, pas une parole de colère ou de vengeance. Il pria Dieu de ne point imputer sa mort à ses juges. « Sans doute, disait-il, ils ont été trompés par de faux témoins. » Exhorté encore à nommer ses complices, il dit avec la douleur d'un être droit et vrai à qui sans cesse on oppose la même calomnie : « Hélas ! où il n'y a pas de crime, peut-il y avoir des complices? » Peu d'instantes avant sa fin, le Père Bourges lui dit : « Mon cher frère, vous n'avez plus qu'un instant à vivre : par ce Dieu que vous invoquez, en qui vous espérez et qui est mort pour vous, je vous conjure de rendre gloire à la vérité. » Il répondit : « Je l'ai dite. Je meurs innocent; « mais pourquoi me plaindrais-je ? Jésus-Christ, qui « était l'innocence même, a bien voulu mourir pour « moi par un supplice plus cruel encore. Je n'ai point

« de regret à une vie dont la fin va, j'espère, me  
« conduire à un bonheur éternel. Je plains mon épouse  
« et mon fils; mais cet étranger, ce fils de M. La-  
« vaysse, à qui je croyais faire politesse en l'invitant à  
« souper, ah ! c'est lui qui augmente encore mes re-  
« grets ! »

Que ce sentiment est naturel et noble ! Le malheur dans sa famille ne semble plus l'étonner ; il n'y a plus de bonheur possible pour eux, depuis le suicide de son fils aîné et tout ce qui en est résulté. Mais qu'un étranger, un ami, un jeune homme de vingt ans à peine, ne soit venu sous son toit que pour être enveloppé dans leur infortune, c'est une pensée qui le désole à son dernier moment.

Tant de foi, ce calme, cet oubli de soi-même, offrent un contraste terrible avec l'état d'esprit du Capitoul David. On l'a souvent et violemment blâmé d'avoir assisté à la torture et au supplice de sa victime ; il est certain que rien ne l'y obligeait ; ses fonctions ne l'y appelaient nullement ; on a prétendu qu'il avait voulu repaître ses yeux des tourments et de la mort de Jean Calas. Nous ne croyons pas ce reproche fondé. Il faut être juste, même à l'égard de David, et même sur l'échafaud de Calas. Le sentiment qui poussa le fougueux magistrat à manquer ainsi à toutes les convenances nous paraît tout autre ; nous n'y voyons que l'ardent désir de ne s'être pas trompé, de ne s'en rapporter à personne pour surprendre un aveu, ne fût-ce que dans un mot ou dans un regard. David n'était pas un monstre ; c'était un fanatique plein de précipitation et d'emportement. Il avait besoin de croire que les Calas étaient coupables, et à mesure que le dernier moment approchait, il renfermait avec effort au dedans de lui les premières angoisses du doute épouvantable qui finit par le rendre fou. De ces deux hommes, l'un n'est en ce moment qu'un débris informe de la torture et de la

mort, et il sait que sa femme, son fils, sont menacés de l'horrible supplice qu'il endure; l'autre est dans toute la force de la vie et du pouvoir qu'il a passionnément ambitionné. Mais le supplicié touche à la fin de ses maux; il va mourir dans la paix et l'espérance, pour s'éveiller loin des atteintes cruelles de l'homme, dans le sein de Dieu. Ce Capitoul va vivre au contraire, le remords dans l'âme, bientôt exécré du genre humain, mis au pilori de l'opinion par les plumes vengeresses des premiers écrivains de l'époque, joué, sur tous les théâtres et en toutes langues, comme le type d'un juge inique et sanguinaire; il finira par se tuer dans un accès de folie <sup>1</sup>.

Le dernier instant de cette scène hideuse étant arrivé, les deux heures étant expirées, David s'élança vers Calas, furieux d'être déçu dans son attente; il montra de la main au mourant le bûcher dressé à côté de la roue, en lui criant : « Malheureux! voici le bûcher qui va réduire ton corps en cendre; dis la vérité! » Calas, épuisé, ne répondit qu'en détournant la tête, comme signe de dénégation, et le bourreau lui fit enfin la grâce de l'étrangler.

Les deux moines dominicains, les pères Bourges et Caldaigues, qui assistèrent à la question et ensuite à l'exécution, dirent hautement que le supplicié avait persévéré à se déclarer innocent, lui et tous les siens. Ils firent plus, ils rendirent pleine justice à l'héroïsme de sa mort. On prétend même qu'ils dirent tous deux : « C'est ainsi que mouraient nos martyrs. » Mais nous doutons que ce rapprochement qui dut, en effet, se présenter à leur esprit, ait pu sortir de leur bouche.

Le Père Bourges crut devoir aller lui-même chez tous les juges leur rendre le compte le plus précis de ce qu'il avait vu et entendu. De si loin que le procureur

1. Voir plus bas, ch. xii.

général Riquet de Bonrepos vit arriver le dominicain, il lui cria : « Eh bien ! père, eh bien ! notre homme a-t-il avoué ? » Le père lui dit la vérité <sup>1</sup>.

Cette loyale conduite fait honneur aux deux dominicains et prouve l'impression puissante produite sur les assistants par la constance et la piété du mourant <sup>2</sup>. Il est triste d'ajouter que nous reverrons bientôt ce même père Bourges jouant un tout autre rôle.

Nous savons qu'on fit tout, auprès des autres accusés, pour exploiter la terreur où dut les jeter cette extrême rigueur de leurs juges. On leur fit croire que le même sort les attendait. Des prisons du palais on les ramena dans celles de l'hôtel de ville où les condamnés attendaient leur exécution. On doubla leurs gardes. Enfin on leur ôta leurs couteaux, leurs fourchettes, tout ce qui pouvait servir à un suicide, comme on a coutume de faire à l'égard de ceux dont la mort est une satisfaction que la loi se réserve <sup>3</sup>.

On écrivit plus tard de Montauban, quand Mme Calas s'y fut réfugiée <sup>4</sup> : « La pauvre veuve n'a jamais vu son mari depuis son arrestation. Elle a été très-maltraitée dans la prison. Le concierge lui disait à tout moment

1. Il existe aux Archives impériales une déclaration écrite de l'abbé Rachou, qui tient du père Bourges lui-même que « Calas, jusqu'à son dernier moment, n'a cessé de se déclarer innocent et en a pris Dieu pour témoin. »

2. Il est impossible de ne pas être révolté de l'absurdité de ce système judiciaire. Supposons que ce vieillard eût perdu ses forces morales comme celles du corps et qu'à un moment quelconque de son long martyre, pendant l'une ou l'autre des deux tortures, ordinaire et extraordinaire, ou sous la massue de fer du bourreau, ou sur les rayons ensanglantés de la roue, il eût manqué soit de présence d'esprit, soit de force de volonté un seul instant ; un mot d'aveu, qui lui eût échappé, suffisait pour donner à ses accusateurs un épouvantable triomphe, et pour envoyer au même supplice sa femme, son fils, Lavaysse et Viguière.

3. Lav., 3 ; E. de B., 3.

4. Nous ne connaissons pas l'auteur des trois lettres datées de Montauban, publiées par nous à la suite des Lettres inédites de Voltaire ; le ton de cette correspondance est passionné ; nous ne pouvons en garantir la parfaite exactitude ; et cependant rien ne nous autorise à la nier.

les indignités les plus atroces; elle y fut malade dans un cachot dont les murailles dégouttaient toujours de l'humidité locale; on lui volait tout ce qu'on pouvait, et cinq à six prêtres ou moines se relevaient alternativement pour la tenter, soit par l'impression des maux qu'ils lui annonçaient le plus cruellement du monde, soit par toute autre sorte de voies ordinaires à ces gens-là; et ces tourments n'ont cessé qu'au moment où elle en est sortie. »

On dit aussi que pendant quatre jours elle ignora le supplice de son mari. Peut-être voulait-on lui cacher qu'il avait tout souffert sans se démentir en rien; on espéra jusqu'au bout obtenir d'elle soit un aveu soit au moins une abjuration. Après lui avoir annoncé l'atroce et sainte mort de Calas, on continua pendant onze jours à essayer de l'intimider<sup>1</sup>.

Un des soldats de garde raconta à Lavaysse qu'ils étaient tous condamnés. Pierre Calas a écrit plus tard :

« Un *Jacobin*<sup>2</sup> vint dans mon cachot et me menaça du même genre de mort si je n'abjurais pas; c'est ce que j'atteste devant Dieu. »

Ce genre de torture morale porta ses fruits. Les deux jeunes gens terrifiés abjurèrent dans la prison. On en profita pour continuer à l'égard de Mme Calas un système odieux de persécution. On obligea le confesseur de Pierre à le mener auprès d'elle, pour lui annoncer sa conversion. Ainsi, la malheureuse mère ne revit un de ses enfants que pour recevoir de lui-même, et devant un prêtre, cette nouvelle blessure. On espérait que, surprise par cet aveu, elle éclaterait contre son fils en reproches fanatiques, qui serviraient de preuves contre

1. Lettres de Voltaire. — Notre recueil, p. 108.

2. On sait que c'était un des noms populaires des frères prêcheurs ou dominicains.

elle; car, si elle s'emportait contre lui, elle avait dû s'irriter aussi contre Marc-Antoine. Elle sentit le piège comme l'affront et les déjoua sans effort. La veuve du martyr écouta, immobile, la honteuse déclaration de son fils renégat, puis détourna la tête sans daigner lui répondre un mot<sup>1</sup>. Ce noble et touchant silence fut tout ce qu'on obtint d'elle par cette lâche épreuve.

L'inébranlable fermeté de Calas avait sauvé son fils, sa veuve et leurs deux compagnons de captivité. Rien n'était avoué. Le but de ce supplice horrible était manqué. Ce qui devait confondre les accusés était devenu une preuve énorme en leur faveur. L'opinion populaire, d'abord unanime contre eux, commençait à se partager. Jean Calas n'était mort ni comme les parricides, ni comme les fanatiques. S'il était innocent, tous l'étaient comme lui; et si même ils étaient coupables, on n'avait plus aucun espoir de le démontrer.

Le procureur général Riquet de Bonrepos eut cependant l'implacable courage de requérir, le lendemain du martyre de Jean Calas, que sa veuve, son fils et Lavaysse fussent pendus, après avoir fait amende honorable, et Jeanne Viguiet condamnée à assister à leur exécution, et à être enfermée ensuite « pour sa vie, au quartier de force de l'hôpital. »

Le conseiller-rapporteur fut moins sévère. Il ne parla plus de peine capitale, mais il proposa celle des galères contre Pierre Calas. Voici sur quel fondement. On n'avait jamais cru sérieusement qu'un vieillard plus que sexagénaire, atteint, depuis deux ans, de douleurs qui rendaient ses jambes chancelantes, eût pu

1. J'ai souvent pensé que pour un grand peintre, habile à représenter les émotions contenues, il y aurait dans le contraste des trois personnages de cette scène muette, une donnée féconde : la veuve, majestueuse dans sa douleur et sa sévérité mêlée de pitié, le fils, atterré d'un tel accueil, saisi de honte en se comparant à sa mère, et sur le second plan un dominicain, en robe blanche, à la figure intelligente et grave, tout étonné, admirant malgré lui l'héroïsme huguenot de Mme Calas.



seul assassiner un grand et vigoureux jeune homme de vingt-huit ans. On avait toujours supposé que Pierre Calas avait été le principal bourreau de son frère et l'on avait compté sur les aveux de son père pour le convaincre. A défaut de cette preuve décisive, il ne put être condamné à mort. Mais on invoquait contre lui un témoignage contradictoire et absurde comme nous en avons tant vu dans la procédure.

Au rez-de-chaussée de la maison des Calas se trouvaient deux boutiques, la leur et celle d'un tailleur nommé Bou. Pendant l'instruction du procès, on fit venir de Montpellier un nommé Cazères, ancien garçon de magasin chez ce tailleur. Il prétendait qu'un jour du mois d'août précédent, la demoiselle Bou, femme du tailleur, entendant *sonner la bénédiction*, avait donné ordre aux trois garçons de boutique d'aller y assister. Sur quoi Pierre Calas, qui venait d'entrer, lui aurait dit :

« Vous ne pensez qu'à vos bénédictions : on peut se sauver dans les deux religions ; deux de mes frères pensent comme moi ; si je savais qu'ils voulussent changer, je serois en état de les poignarder, et si j'avois été à la place de mon père, quand Louis se fit catholique, je ne l'aurois pas épargné. »

On vit dans ce témoignage une très-forte présomption contre Pierre Calas, quoiqu'il niât ces propos, et que la femme Bou, ainsi que les deux autres garçons de boutique, Capdeville et Guillaumet, déclarassent tout le récit de Cazères absolument controuvé. Tous les trois offrirent d'en témoigner ; l'avocat Sudre, dans son premier Mémoire, publia leurs offres de venir déposer ; elles ne furent point acceptées. Les paroles prêtées à Pierre Calas étaient d'ailleurs contradictoires ; s'il pensait que l'on peut se sauver dans les deux religions, il n'était pas de ces fanatiques qui punissent une abjuration à coups de couteau. Pourquoi donc eût-il été tenté de poignarder son frère ? Pourquoi

avait-il lui-même épargné Louis, s'il blâmait son père de ne pas l'avoir frappé ? Et pourquoi vouloir assassiner Marc-Antoine en épargnant Louis ?

Cet amas de contradictions, affirmées par un seul témoin et démenties par trois autres, n'en parut pas moins un grave indice. Il est vrai que M. de Cassan-Clairac, qui demanda pour Pierre les galères à perpétuité, fut seul de son avis. Plusieurs opinèrent à l'acquittement ; d'autres votèrent le bannissement à vie, et le rapporteur s'étant rendu à cette proposition, ce fut celle qui prévalut. Il fut condamné au bannissement perpétuel hors du royaume, à peine de la vie, condamné, non pour tel ou tel crime déterminé, mais *pour les cas résultant du procès*, formule trop commode qui motivait une sentence sans dire comment.

Le même rapporteur conclut au bannissement de la veuve Calas et de Lavaysse ; les autres juges les mirent hors de cour et de procès. Viguière seule avait trouvé grâce devant le rapporteur, parce qu'elle était bonne catholique ; son acquittement fut unanime. Tous trois furent déclarés hors de cour, dépens compensés.

Rien de plus informe et de plus déraisonnable que ce jugement prononcé le 18 mars. On ne se serait pas contenté de bannir Pierre Calas, si l'on avait pu le considérer comme un des assassins de son frère. L'innocence de tous les autres était reconnue. Il restait donc désormais acquis que le père, âgé de soixante-quatre ans, avait seul étranglé son fils, sans que la mère, le frère, ni Lavaysse, ni la servante, qui se trouvaient dans la maison, en eussent connaissance. Évidemment la plupart des juges avaient reconnu leur erreur<sup>1</sup>.

1. Aussi fit-on circuler l'épigramme suivante :

Nos seigneurs de la cour, par leur second arrêt,  
Ceci soit dit sans ironie,  
Ont confondu la calomnie  
Bien mieux que Paul Rabaut n'a fait.

Ce fut le sentiment général. Le désappointement de ceux des Tou-

Le public le comprit et l'on dit très-généralement que si la Cour avait jugé Calas le dernier au lieu de le juger avant tous les autres, il n'aurait pas été condamné.

Les magistrats sentirent eux-mêmes que cet arrêt du 18 mars était la censure de celui du 9. Aussi les plus obstinés s'y opposèrent de toutes leurs forces. Nous lisons dans une lettre de Toulouse fort hostile aux Calas<sup>1</sup> que l'arrêt avait été rendu par une majorité de 10 contre 3 ; que ces 3 étaient le président, le rapporteur et M. de Lasbordes. « Le rapporteur et le président ont été plusieurs jours sans vouloir signer cet arrêt et ils ont même montré assez publiquement leur indignation. »

La sentence prononcée contre Pierre ne fut exécutée que pour la forme, et d'une manière dérisoire ; mais il en subit une autre plus dure à laquelle aucun tribunal ne l'avait condamné. Son arrêt d'exil reçut un simulacre d'exécution. Le bourreau conduisit le banni hors de la porte Saint-Michel ; mais un prêtre l'accompagnait et le ramena immédiatement en ville par une autre porte, jusqu'au couvent des Jacobins. Le père Bourges, celui même qui avait reçu les dernières paroles du martyr, attendait le fils sur le seuil du couvent et l'y fit entrer en lui disant que s'il pratiquait le culte catholique, sa sentence d'exil resterait comme non avenue. Le faible jeune homme donna dans le piège, se trouva prisonnier, gardé à vue, et ne réussit à s'échapper que le 4 juillet, après quatre mois de captivité.

lousains qui espéraient quatre autres supplices après ceux de Rochette, des trois frères Grenier et de Calas, qu'ils avaient vus en un mois, fut très-vif. Amblard en rendit compte en ces termes à l'intendant de Languedoc : « Toute la ville crie contre les six juges qui ont formé cet arrêt. Ils prétendent qu'ils se sont déterminés à modifier la peine, parce que le sieur Lavaysse et Calas fils se sont convertis et ont fait leur abjuration (20 mars). » Amblard ajoute que sept juges contre six, majorité insuffisante, avaient voté la mort de Mme Calas, de Pierre et de Lavayssé. (Salvan, p. 115.)

1. Lettre de Couder, *Bibliogr.*, n° 21.

Il laissa, pour le père Bourges, cette lettre remarquable :

« Je vous remercie de toutes vos bontés. Je vous ai souvent dit mes doutes et mes peines. Mais je ne vous en ai communiqué qu'une partie. Vous en jugerez par mon évvasion. J'ai vécu chez vous dans de si grandes perplexités, que si la grâce de Dieu ne m'eût soutenu, je me serais pendu tout comme mon malheureux frère. »

Il alla rejoindre son frère Donat à Genève. On affirme qu'il avait presque perdu la vue en neuf mois de prison<sup>1</sup>; le fait n'est pas inexact, mais exagéré. Quant à sa conversion au catholicisme, elle ne dura pas plus que son séjour forcé au couvent.

Nous regrettons de n'avoir aucun détail sur le moment où la malheureuse veuve de Calas sortit seule, avec sa vieille domestique, de cette prison où elle était entrée avec son mari et son fils. Nous trouvons dans des papiers de famille le récit de l'élargissement de Lavaysse, écrit par une de ses nièces.

« Le 20 mars 1762, le dixième jour après l'exécution de l'infortuné Calas, et le surlendemain de celui où, contre toute logique, le Parlement avait ordonné la mise en liberté de ceux qu'il avait déclarés être les complices nécessaires de sa victime, un ami de la famille Lavaysse vint l'engager à couvrir du plus grand mystère l'élargissement du jeune Alexandre Gaubert, de crainte que la populace déjà prévenue ne se pût taroquer contre lui aux plus violents excès. M<sup>e</sup> Jouve, avocat plein d'énergie et de dévouement répondit, dans le patois alors fort usité : *« Non, il faut qu'il sorte au grand jour, sans crainte comme sans jactance, et ce sera moi qui l'accompagnerai avec Sénoverl »* (beau-frère de Lavaysse). » Lorsque tous deux entrèrent dans la fatale geôle où le prisonnier était retenu dans le plus rigide secret, il s'évanouit en embrassant son beau-frère. Ce ne fut qu'avec les plus grands ménagements que celui-ci, après lui avoir fait enlever ses fers, le prépara au bonheur de revoir sa famille. L'opération avait été cruelle : mon oncle avait les jambes entièrement gorgées. Il entra dans une chaise à porteurs, y resta, les mains sur ses genoux, une glace étant ouverte; c'était celle que gardait M. Jouve; M. de Sénoverl était à l'autre portière. De l'Hôtel-de-Ville jusqu'à la

1. Salvan, p. 116, etc.

rue St-Remesy, une foule immense encombra le passage ; mais les dispositions étaient changées, soit que l'effusion du sang eût assouvi la soif du fanatisme, soit que, repentant, le fanatisme lui-même se fût converti en pitié ; chacun félicitait M. de Sénart, et disait en répandant des larmes : *Oh ! non, ce jeune homme si beau, si doux, fils d'un homme de bien, n'a pu assassiner son ami.* »

Le supplice de Jean Calas, trois semaines après celui de Rochette et des frères De Grenier, le jugement inique des quatre autres accusés, et bientôt après, l'enlèvement des demoiselles Calas, qui furent enfermées dans des couvents par lettres de cachet, jetèrent comme sur coup l'effroi parmi les coreligionnaires de cette famille si cruellement persécutée.

« Il y a un feu terrible à la Tournelle et plusieurs personnes ont été décrétées, disait-on à Toulouse le 13 mars<sup>1</sup>. »

« La terreur des protestants de Toulouse, écrit un de leurs descendants, était telle que le jour de l'exécution de Calas une famille protestante n'osa sortir de sa demeure, ni ouvrir les volets de son appartement. On cita à la fois comme un exemple unique de fermeté et d'influence, la conduite que tint le docteur Sol, qui sortit et visita ses malades comme il le faisait tous les jours<sup>2</sup>. »

Ces craintes trop justifiées produisirent leurs inévitables effets. Non-seulement maintes familles quittèrent Toulouse dès qu'elles purent disposer de leurs biens ; non-seulement les Clausade<sup>3</sup>, les Cazeing<sup>4</sup> s'établirent à Nîmes ; mais Voltaire parle de deux négociants fort riches dont le départ fut pour l'intolérante cité une perte et un châtiment considérable. (Voir *Lettres* ; notre recueil, p. LVI). L'émigration des protestants recommença dans le Languedoc<sup>5</sup> ; des familles entières quittèrent la France pour aller chercher dans les pays protestants

1. Lettre de M. Poirson, citée plus haut.

2. Voy., sur le docteur Sol, les Lettres de la Sœur Fraisse, et la note 20 à la fin du volume.

3. Lettre du 19 mars 1763 à Mme Calas. — Coll. de M. Fournier.

4. Lettre à la même du 4 février 1764. (*Ib.*)

5. Voy. Court de Gébelin, *Toulousaines*.

Une sécurité que leur patrie ne leur offrait plus. Un mois après le supplice de Calas, Voltaire voyait encore arriver à Genève des fugitifs avec leurs enfants et leurs femmes, et il fit présenter au comte de Choiseul, alors ministre, ces réflexions d'un bon sens incontestable :

« En vérité, si le roi connaissait les conséquences funestes de cette horrible extravagance, il prendrait l'affaire des Calas plus à cœur que moi. Voilà déjà sept familles sorties de France ! Avons-nous donc trop de manufacturiers et de cultivateurs ? »

« Je sou mets ce petit article à la considération de M. le comte de Choiseul. »

Le moment est venu de raconter les infatigables et généreux efforts de Voltaire pour réhabiliter la mémoire du supplicié et pour relever sa veuve et sa famille de l'ignominie et de la misère où on les avait plongées<sup>1</sup>.

1. Nous avons pensé que nos lecteurs verraient ici avec intérêt la signature de Jean Calas ; nous l'empruntons à une simple lettre d'affaires et de commerce.

*Respectueux humble et  
obéissant serviteur  
J. Calas*

Celui qui reçut cette signature et celui même qui l'écrivit étaient loin d'imaginer quel intérêt tragique et de l'ordre le plus élevé s'y attacherait un jour.





## CHAPITRE X.

### VOLTAIRE.

« Cette tragédie me fait oublier toutes les autres, jusqu'aux miennes. »

(Lettre à d'Argental, 5 juillet 1776.)

Avant la fin de mars 1762, un négociant marseillais, Dominique Audibert<sup>1</sup>, qui se rendait de Toulouse à Genève, alla voir Voltaire et lui raconta le procès et l'affreuse exécution qui occupaient tous les esprits dans la ville qu'il venait de quitter. Il affirmait énergiquement que les Calas étaient innocents<sup>2</sup>. A ce récit, Voltaire fut saisi d'horreur, et résolut immédiatement de savoir avec pleine certitude de quel côté était la vérité. Il voyait,

1. Il fut secrétaire de l'Académie de Marseille et mourut à Saint-Germain-en-Laye, le 10 août 1821.

2. « Je me souviendrai toute ma vie que vous fûtes le premier qui me parlâtes des Calas. Vous avez été la première origine de la justice qu'on leur a rendue et de celle qu'on va leur rendre encore. » La date de cette lettre à Audibert diffère dans les éditions. Selon Beuchot, elle serait du 13 décembre 1763.

C'est donc par erreur que M. Sayous (*Dix-huitième siècle à l'étranger*, t. I, p. 344), si bien informé d'ordinaire, attribue à Mouton, MM. Haag et Gaberel à l'avocat de Végobre, l'honneur d'avoir éveillé en l'âme de Voltaire la première étincelle d'une feu si durable et si pur. Il a pu le faire croire lui-même à ses collaborateurs pour les stimuler, mais nous avons tout lieu de croire sincère et bien fondée la déclaration si nette adressée à Audibert.



d'une part ou de l'autre, le fanatisme, soit protestant soit catholique, aboutir à un acte de cruauté effroyable. Or, ce qu'il y avait peut-être de plus sincère et de plus vif en lui, c'était l'indignation ardente que lui inspiraient les crimes commis au nom de la religion. Il avait fort peu de religion sans doute ; il en avait assez cependant, lui qui ne cessa jamais de croire en Dieu, pour que tout en lui se soulevât, à l'ouïe d'actes sanglants commis au nom de Dieu. Avant de savoir qui avait raison dans ce drame affreux, il résolut d'en avoir le cœur net.

C'est dans ce sentiment qu'il écrivit le 29 mars 1762 à d'Alembert :

Pour l'amour de Dieu, rendez aussi exécration que vous le pourrez le fanatisme qui a fait pendre un fils par son père ou qui a fait rouer un innocent par huit conseillers du Roi.

— Cette horrible affaire, dit-il vers la même époque à son ami le comte d'Argental, déshonore la nature humaine, soit que Calas soit coupable, soit qu'il soit innocent. Il y a certainement, d'un côté ou de l'autre, un fanatisme horrible<sup>1</sup> et il est utile d'approfondir la vérité.

Dès le 23 mars, il communiqua l'horreur où le jetait cette histoire, à un singulier confident, cet étrange cardinal de Bernis, qui trouvait bon d'être appelé en vers Babet la Bouquetière.

Pourrai-je supplier Votre Éminence de vouloir bien me dire ce que je dois penser de l'aventure affreuse de ce Calas, roué à Toulouse pour avoir pendu son fils ? C'est qu'on prétend ici qu'il est très-innocent, et qu'il en a pris Dieu à témoin en expirant. On prétend que trois juges ont protesté contre l'arrêt. Cette aventure me tient au cœur ; elle m'attriste dans mes plaisirs ; elle les corrompt. Il faut regarder le Parlement de Toulouse ou les protestants avec des yeux d'horreur.

La réponse de l'Éminence tarda jusqu'au 7 août et

1. Ces derniers mots se retrouvent presque textuellement dans une lettre de Voltaire à Mme\*\*\* (du Deffand?) en date du 2 août (1762), dont j'ai vu l'original au *British Museum*.

fut essentiellement équivoque ; c'est un chef-d'œuvre du genre.

Il y a du louche des deux côtés ; le jugement est incompréhensible, mais le fait ne paraît pas éclairci. J'en vois assez pour être fort mécontent et même fort scandalisé.

Scandalisé ! Par qui ? — Mécontent ! De quoi ? Il est impossible de mieux suivre le conseil du fabuliste et d'être *enrhumé* plus à propos.

Il ne faut pas s'étonner de voir Voltaire consulter un cardinal sur le procès des Calas. Aussitôt qu'il se fut promis de voir le fond de cette affaire, il ne cessa de s'informer, écrivant de tous côtés à la fois et consultant tout le monde. Les premières réponses qu'il reçut étaient contradictoires. Ignorant les faits et trompés par le Monitoire, bien des protestants crurent, dans le premier moment, que le condamné avait commis quelque forfait.

Quel fut mon étonnement, dit-il plus tard, lorsqu'ayant écrit en Languedoc sur cette étrange aventure, catholiques et protestants me répondirent qu'il ne fallait pas douter du crime des Calas ! (A Damilaville, 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1765),

Il ne tarda pas à apprendre que le jeune Donat Calas était à Genève, où il avait fui en apprenant, à Nîmes, les tragiques malheurs de sa famille. Voltaire revint de Ferney à sa maison des *Délices* pour l'avoir sous la main et l'interroger plus à l'aise <sup>1</sup>.

Je fis venir le jeune Calas chez moi ; je m'attendais à voir un *énervé*, tel que son pays en a produit quelquefois. Je vis un enfant simple, ingénu, de la physionomie la plus douce et la plus intéressante et qui, en me parlant, faisait des efforts inutiles pour retenir ses larmes <sup>2</sup>.

1. Lettre de Genève, 26 avril, à Paul Rabaut, par le Pasteur Théodore (Chiron)., *Egl. du Dés.*, t. II, p. 324.

2. Voir sa *Lettre à M. d'Am.*... Il y donne un récit très-bref, mais intéressant, de ses relations avec les Calas et de la part qu'il prit à leur histoire.

Déterminé à bien savoir ce qu'étaient les Calas, il garda chez lui cet apprenti de quinze ans assez longtemps pour le connaître parfaitement; de longs entretiens eurent lieu entre un enfant naïf et le vieillard le plus spirituel, l'esprit le plus pénétrant et le plus rusé, qu'il y eût au monde. Si, en faisant jaser cet adolescent bientôt apprivoisé et sans défiance, Voltaire avait rencontré en lui le fils d'une famille de fanatiques capables d'étrangler leurs enfants, il ne s'y serait point trompé, et dans ses interminables controverses avec Genève protestante, le crime des Calas eût été rappelé souvent. Il reconnut, au contraire, que la famille dont un enfant lui révélait, sans le savoir, l'intérieur, respirait tout entière non-seulement l'honneur et l'intégrité, mais la douceur des mœurs et une tolérance respectueuse pour le culte d'autrui. Il apprit la conduite du père et de la mère envers leur domestique dévot, envers les demoiselles Bonafous, envers Louis, converti au catholicisme, et dès lors sa conviction fut arrêtée. J'avoue que cette enquête, faite par Voltaire encore incertain, m'inspire une grande confiance. Il pouvait lui convenir d'attaquer le Parlement plutôt que les protestants, mais il lui importait bien plus de ne pas s'aventurer sans être absolument sûr de la vérité. Pour démêler le vrai du faux dans un procès contemporain, je ne sais s'il y eut jamais tribunal aussi habile que lui.

Il sut que deux négociants de Genève, hautement estimés, étaient depuis longtemps en rapports d'affaires avec Calas et avaient reçu dans leurs voyages l'hospitalité sous son toit<sup>1</sup>; aussitôt il s'empressa de les consulter.

1. Ce devaient être Philippe Debrus et Cathala, ou peut-être Jean des Arts et son frère Philippe; nous savons que Debrus et les frères des Arts avaient logé chez Calas (Voir aux *Archives* leur témoignage écrit, envoyé plus tard à Paris).

Bientôt il forma secrètement à Genève une sorte de comité consultatif composé du négociant Debrus, du ministre Moulton, de l'avocat de Végobre et du banquier Cathala auxquels se joignit quelquefois le jurisconsulte Tronchin<sup>1</sup>. Tantôt ce comité se réunissait chez Voltaire; tantôt, soit avec son concours personnel, soit en son absence, chez l'un des membres établis à Genève.

Il imagina ensuite de se mettre en rapport avec Mme Calas elle-même et lui fit écrire.

La veuve Calas à qui, pour comble de malheurs et d'outrages, on avait enlevé ses filles, était retirée dans une solitude... Je lui fis demander si elle signerait, au nom de Dieu, que son mari était mort innocent. Elle n'hésita pas; je n'hésitai pas non plus.

Ce fut à cette occasion qu'elle écrivit à Debrus ou à l'avocat de Végobre la lettre que nous avons reproduite plus haut (p. 74) et dont Voltaire fut si profondément touché.

Cependant il lui semblait qu'il n'aurait jamais assez de preuves et de renseignements en main, et il employait en même temps à lui en procurer, trois ou quatre personnes pour le moins, ne se faisant aucun scrupule de mettre en œuvre toutes sortes de ruses. Tantôt il fait croire à chacun que tout dépend de lui seul. Tantôt, quand il correspond avec quelque partisan zélé de la tolérance, ou de la Réforme, ou des Calas, il feint des doutes, et demande de nouveaux arguments. Il est impossible de nier que ces détours ne soient choquants et ne gâtent quelque peu le dévouement de Voltaire à la grande œuvre de justice qu'il entreprit.

Un de ses plus utiles et plus actifs conseillers fut l'a-

1. Le Recueil de lettres inédites de Voltaire que nous avons publié se compose surtout de ses missives à ses collaborateurs, soit d'après le Recueil Maunoir ou Dawson-Turner au *British Museum*, soit d'après les papiers de Moulton, appartenant à son descendant M. Streckeisen. (Bibliogr. n° 56).

vocat de Végobre<sup>1</sup>. Court de Gébelin dit qu'il fournit à Voltaire « des pièces où l'on ne sait ce qui brille le plus de l'érudition, de la solidité et du goût. » Les divers écrits de Voltaire sur l'affaire Calas ont été rédigés par lui sur les notes que lui remettait de Végobre. C'était un de ces hommes désintéressés et véritablement dévoués qui mettent leur bonheur à se rendre utiles sans en demander la récompense ni à l'intérêt ni à la gloire.

Voltaire employa beaucoup aussi l'activité d'un négociant de Montauban, lettré comme Audibert, et de plus, passionné pour les arts, Ribotte-Charon<sup>2</sup>. En le voyant plein de chaleur pour la cause des malheureux Calas, leur malicieux protecteur lui écrivit une lettre qui dut exciter au plus haut degré son zèle. « On les croit très-coupables; on tient que le Parlement a fait justice et miséricorde. M. Ribotte devrait aller à Toulouse s'éclaircir de cette horrible aventure. Il faut qu'il sache et dise la vérité : on se conduira en conséquence. » (2 juin 1762.) Il y avait de quoi donner des ailes à l'ardent Montalbanais, dans ces doutes simulés et dans cette idée que pour les Calas, auprès de Voltaire, tout dépendait de ses seuls efforts.

A Montpellier, où résidait M. de Saint-Priest, intendant du Languedoc, Voltaire employa un nommé Chazel, qui communiqua une lettre de lui à l'intendant et à quelques autres puissants personnages. La réponse de Chazel peint très-bien l'embarras où se trouvaient ceux qui n'avaient point de parti pris :

Il n'est pas une seule personne sensée dans cette province qui ose porter un jugement assuré. Les magistrats, qui devraient mettre la vérité dans tout son jour, se taisent avec obstination. Ce silence fait déraisonner et les partisans et les ennemis de Calas<sup>3</sup>.

1. Note 21 à la fin du volume.

2. Note 22 à la fin du volume.

3. Lettre inédite du 12 mai; Collection Lajariette de Nantes.

Un ministre de l'Évangile, Paul Moulou de Genève, dont nous avons esquissé ailleurs<sup>1</sup> la figure originale, le seul homme peut-être qui resta toute sa vie en relations affectueuses avec Voltaire et avec Rousseau à la fois, fut souvent mis en réquisition par Voltaire, chargé également par lui d'étudier la question et de lui fournir les pièces de jurisprudence nécessaires. « Voltaire, dit, d'après les documents du temps un écrivain moderne, paraissait un peu effrayé du poids et de la responsabilité de cette entreprise. Moulou, avec M. et Mme de la Rive qu'il affectionnait beaucoup, l'encouragèrent de toutes leurs forces. »

L'entreprise était grave en effet. Il s'agissait de soulever l'opinion de la France et même de l'Europe contre les arrêts du Parlement de Toulouse, et d'amener ce corps à les révoquer de gré ou de force. Il fallait faire casser la sentence de mort du supplicié, réhabiliter sa mémoire et offrir à sa veuve, à ses enfants, toutes les réparations possibles<sup>2</sup>.

La lettre suivante à Damilaville (4 avril) est une sorte de circulaire ou de mot d'ordre à tout le parti de l'Encyclopédie ; elle marque le moment où Voltaire ouvre la campagne contre les juges de Calas :

Mes chers frères, il est avéré que les juges toulousains ont roué le plus innocent des hommes. Presque tout le Languedoc en gémit avec horreur. Les nations étrangères, qui nous haïssent et qui nous battent, sont saisies d'indignation. Jamais, depuis le jour de la Saint-Barthélemy, rien n'a tant déshonoré la nature humaine. Criez et qu'on crie<sup>3</sup>.

1. *Lettres inédites*. Notre recueil. Introd., p. 51-64.

2. D'après les articles 8, 9, 10, 18 et 28 du titre XVI de l'*Ordonnance* de 1670, on pouvait appeler au roi en son Conseil des arrêts d'un Parlement.

3. Il continue cette même lettre en faisant mention d'une brochure qui, dit-il, n'est pas de lui et qu'il faut faire imprimer. J'avais cru d'abord qu'il s'agissait d'un de ses écrits en faveur des Calas. C'était une erreur. Il ne publia rien sur ce sujet avant le mois de juillet, ce qui est

Malgré sa conviction arrêtée, il feint de douter encore, surtout quand il écrit au cardinal de Bernis (15 mai):

Si vous pouviez, sans vous compromettre, vous informer de la vérité, ma curiosité et mon humanité vous auraient une bien grande obligation. V. E. pourrait me faire parvenir le Mémoire qu'on lui aurait envoyé de Toulouse, et assurément je ne dirais pas qu'il m'est venu par vous.

Toutes les lettres que j'ai du Languedoc se contredisent : c'est un chaos qu'il est impossible de débrouiller.

Il est vrai que le même jour (15 mai) il parlait à d'Argental sur un ton bien différent.

M. le maréchal de Richelieu m'a écrit une grande lettre sur les Calas, mais il n'est pas plus au fait que moi. Le Parlement de Toulouse, qui voit qu'il a fait un horrible pas de clerc, empêche que la vérité ne soit connue.

On voit que déjà il avait intéressé à la famille de Calas celui qu'il appelait : *mon héros*, le spirituel et débauché maréchal. Ce ne fut pas sans peine<sup>1</sup>.

Peut-être même eut-il encore des moments de doute sincère en voyant las rigueurs de l'autorité s'appesantir sur les restes malheureux de la famille Calas. C'est ainsi qu'à la nouvelle de l'arrestation des deux jeunes filles il écrivit au comte d'Argental, le 5 juin :

J'apprends dans l'instant qu'on vient d'enfermer dans des couvents séparés la veuve Calas<sup>2</sup> et ses deux filles. La famille entière des Calas serait-elle coupable, comme on l'assure, d'un parricide horrible ? M. de St-Florentin est entièrement au fait ; je vous demande à genoux de vous en informer. Parlez-en à M. le comte de Choiseul : il est très-aisé de savoir de M. de St-Florentin la vérité ; et à mon avis, cette vérité importe au genre humain.

prouvé, tantôt par les dates, tantôt par les faits mêmes qu'il raconte. Ses écrits sur les Calas ne purent paraître à Paris. Il les fit imprimer par Cramer à Genève.

1. Je me souviendrai toujours, écrivait-il longtemps après, que mon héros me prit pour un extravagant quand j'osai entreprendre l'affaire des Calas.

(Lettre à Mme de Saint-Julien, 25 novembre 1773.)

2. C'était une erreur, quant à la mère.

Le surlendemain il renouvelle auprès d'Argental ses vives instances pour que l'on tâche de faire parler le comte de Saint-Florentin, mais il ajoute ce trait d'excellente satire :

Peut-être ne sait-il autre chose sinon qu'il a signé des lettres de cachet.

Au commencement de juillet, il avait déjà écrit ou fait écrire au comte de Saint-Florentin par la duchesse d'Anville, par Richelieu, par le duc de Villars; il avait écrit lui-même à M. Ménard, premier commis du Ministre; il avait fait écrire à un M. de Chaban en qui ce même Ministre avait grande confiance, et son médecin, le fameux Tronchin, avait employé, auprès de ce même personnage, le crédit de son parent le fermier général. Le chancelier<sup>1</sup> avait été attaqué de deux côtés différents, par son ami le Premier Président de Nicolaï et par son gendre M. d'Auriac, président au Grand Conseil, auquel écrivit de son côté, à l'insu de Voltaire, et plusieurs fois, sa cousine germaine, la sœur A.-J. Fraisse<sup>2</sup>. On trouve encore les noms de M. de Chazelles, de M. de La Marche, parmi ceux des personnes dont il enrôla l'influence au service de la cause qu'il avait embrassée avec tant d'ardeur<sup>3</sup>. On pouvait compter sur les dispositions bienveillantes du duc de Choiseul, ministre des affaires étrangères. Mme de Pompadour promit de parler au roi<sup>4</sup>.

Rien ne pouvait se faire qu'au nom de la veuve et avec sa participation. Abîmée de douleur, privée de ses

1. Guillaume II de Lamoignon, né en 1683, chancelier en 1750, mort en 1772.

2. Voir plus bas les lettres de la religieuse, n° 1, 11 et 12.

3. Lettre du 15 avril à Mlle \*\*\*; du 8 juillet à Argental.

4. Nous ne savons et nous nous soucions peu de savoir si elle tint parole. Le recueil de ses lettres, où on la représente lisant à Louis XV quelques passages d'un écrit de Voltaire pour les Calas n'a rien d'authentique. Il fit agir tour à tour auprès d'elle le docteur Tronchin et le duc de la Vallière.



filles, séparée de tous ses fils, elle s'était retirée seule avec Jeanne Viguiier à la campagne, dans les environs de Montauban, et ne songeait plus qu'à dérober à tous les yeux ses larmes et le deuil sanglant dont elle avait peine à supporter l'horreur. Quand on lui écrivit qu'elle devait sortir de sa retraite, se montrer au grand jour, aller à Paris, solliciter auprès des grands, elle eut peur. moins encore de l'effort cruel qu'on lui demandait que de l'inutilité et même du péril de ses démarches<sup>1</sup>. Elle craignit surtout pour ses filles et pour Pierre. Une sorte de lutte sourde s'établit entre elle et Voltaire; lui, ne voyant d'autre but à poursuivre que la cassation du jugement, elle, comme il était naturel de la part d'une mère, demandant avant tout qu'on lui rendît ses filles<sup>2</sup>. Trois de ses enfants étaient enfermés dans autant de couvents, comme de chers et précieux otages entre les mains des puissances fatales qui avaient mis à mort leur père. Si les efforts qu'elle tenterait pour le réhabiliter allaient déplaire au gouvernement, au clergé, à la magistrature? Et comment n'auraient-ils pas déplu, puisqu'il s'agissait de réclamer contre une sentence prononcée par un Parlement, préparée par l'archevêché et par les Capitouls? Était-ce à elle, trop heureuse encore d'avoir vu bannir son fils Pierre et relâcher les deux autres accusés, au lieu de les voir rouer ou pendre, était-ce à elle de s'attaquer à ces redoutables pouvoirs, dont les coups avaient brisé sa famille et son bonheur? Affronter, dénoncer un David, un Lagane, un Bonrepos! La seule idée d'une si étrange audace la faisait trembler. Au lieu de se hasarder sur cette mer inconnue et orageuse, au lieu d'aller remplir de ses plaintes bruyantes

1. Lettre de Voltaire au marquis de Chauvelin, 13 février 1763.

2. C'est ce qui explique les impatiences de Voltaire, qui par moments s'exprima sur son compte, avec une vivacité que démentait bientôt l'admiration sérieuse qu'il avait pour elle. Tantôt elle était une *huguenote imbécile*, tantôt le modèle de toutes les vertus.

Paris, Versailles, la cour, ne ferait-elle pas mieux d'attendre dans les pleurs que le Dieu de justice et de miséricorde la retirât de ce monde cruel, pour la réunir au martyr dont elle portait le deuil?

Il ne faudrait pas croire que ces craintes fussent chimériques. Voltaire lui-même tremble à son tour « que le parti fanatique qui accable cette famille infortunée et a eu le crédit de faire enfermer les deux sœurs, n'ait encore celui de faire enfermer la mère pour lui fermer toutes les avenues au Conseil du roi. » (7 juillet, à Argental.)

Il aurait suffi à ses ennemis de demander contre elle, comme on l'avait fait contre ses filles, une lettre de cachet; il en avait été question entre le ministre et le procureur-général Bonrepos<sup>1</sup>.

Mais on parla à la veuve de devoirs à remplir envers la mémoire de la victime, envers ses enfants orphelins, envers Pierre, à la fois exilé et détenu, envers Donat, exilé de fait et qu'elle n'osait même désirer de revoir après tant de malheurs, envers ses filles, peut-être persécutées dans les couvents qui leur servaient de prison. On lui fit sentir qu'elle devait se dévouer à la réhabilitation du condamné, aspirer à réunir et à relever sa famille dispersée et ruinée.

Elle comprit et obéit aussitôt. Elle partit, de sa retraite ignorée, pour cette ville de Paris qui lui inspirait une terreur inexprimable. Elle y arriva, et y arriva seule, dans les premiers jours de juin. Il résulte d'une lettre de Voltaire à Thiroux de Crosne, que le 30 janvier 1763, Jeanne était encore en Languedoc. La raison n'en est que trop facile à deviner. Mme Calas était désormais trop pauvre pour avoir une servante, et Jeanne l'était trop, elle aussi, pour suivre à Paris sa maîtresse<sup>2</sup>.

1. Voir Pièces justif., XXVII.

2. On prétend aussi que Mme Calas avait reçu des rapports inquié-

Audibert visita Mme Calas à Paris de la part de Voltaire et lui rendit compte, le 20 juillet, de ses impressions :

« J'ay voulu connoître et voir de près cette femme si digne de pitié ; je n'ay pu que gémir avec elle ; elle est continuellement accablée par les souvenirs cruels qui la déchirent. Son mary, à qui elle étoit unie depuis trente ans, expirant dans un affreux supplice ; son fils aîné se donnant une mort qui le couvre d'ignominie ; ses deux autres fils errants ; ses deux filles enfermées de force dans des couvents ; toute sa famille dispersée ; tous ses biens en sequestre ; son honneur attaqué ; les horreurs de la prison, enfin tous les malheurs possibles rassemblés sur elle, la plongent dans un abattement dont rien au monde ne peut la faire sortir. Elle demande la mort ou la réparation qui luy est due. »

Dès lors commença pour elle cette cruelle vie de solliciteuse, forcée d'étaler partout sous les yeux des grands sa honte imméritée et son affreux veuvage. Ce nouveau supplice dura trois ans.

Quoique absent, Voltaire fut pour elle, pendant ces douloureux moments, un protecteur plein de délicatesse et d'égards, en même temps qu'infatigable dans son activité. Il annonça son arrivée à M. et Mme d'Argental (le 11 juin) dans l'admirable lettre qu'on va lire et qu'il m'est impossible d'abrégier, malgré les répétitions éloquentes qu'on y trouvera :

Mes divins anges, je me jette réellement à vos pieds et à ceux de M. le comte de Choiseul. La veuve Calas est à Paris dans le dessein de demander justice ; l'oserait-elle si son mari eût été coupable ? Elle est de l'ancienne maison de Montesquieu par sa mère (ces Montesquieu sont de Languedoc) ; elle a des sentiments dignes de sa naissance et au-dessus de son terrible malheur. Elle

tants au sujet de l'influence que le clergé exerçait sur l'esprit de Viguière. Un moment, Voltaire eut l'idée de faire venir à Ferney la vieille servante pour la faire interroger, en vertu d'une commission rogatoire, par le juge de la comté de Tournay dont il était seigneur ; mais on lui fit comprendre qu'elle semblerait dès lors dirigée par lui dans ses réponses et ses actes ; il se rendit et renonça à son dessein. (Voir notre Recueil, p. LXIII et LXIV.)

Viguière ne partit de Toulouse que le 18 juin 1764 pour rejoindre Mme Calas, après l'arrêt du roi qui cassait les sentences du Parlement.

a vu son fils renoncer à la vie et se pendre de désespoir ; son mari , accusé d'avoir étranglé son fils , condamné à la roue et attestant Dieu de son innocence en expirant ; un second fils accusé d'être complice d'un parricide , banni , conduit à une porte de la ville et reconduit par une autre dans un couvent ; ses deux filles enlevées ; elle-même enfin , interrogée sur la sellette , accusée d'avoir tué son fils , élargie , déclarée innocente et cependant privée de sa dot. Les gens les plus instruits me jurèrent que cette famille est aussi innocente qu'infortunée. Enfin , si malgré toutes les preuves que j'ai , malgré les serments qu'on m'a faits , cette femme avait quelque chose à se reprocher , qu'on la punisse ; mais si c'est , comme je crois , la plus vertueuse et la plus malheureuse femme du monde , au nom du genre humain , protégez-la. Que M. le comte de Choiseul daigne l'écouter ! Je lui fais tenir un petit papier qui sera son passe-port pour être admise chez vous ; ce papier contient ces mots : « La personne en question vient se présenter chez M. d'Argental , conseiller d'honneur du Parlement , envoyé de Parme , rue de la Sourdière. »

Mes anges , cette bonne œuvre est digne de votre cœur.

Bientôt la pauvre veuve se trouva en proie aux protecteurs bénévoles , aux donneurs de conseils impossibles à suivre. Leurs importunités et leur inintelligence désolaient Voltaire qui de loin savait tout , réparait les maladresses des autres , et ne cessait de trouver des expédients , des ressources et des agents. Sa vigueur , sa netteté de vues et sa fécondité de ressources sont incomparables.

Que demandons-nous ? s'écrie-t-il le 14 juin en écrivant à d'Argental... Que demandons-nous ? rien autre chose sinon que la justice ne soit pas muette comme elle est aveugle , qu'elle parle , qu'elle dise pourquoi elle a condamné Calas. Quelle horreur qu'un jugement secret , une condamnation sans motifs ! Y a-t-il une plus exécrable tyrannie que celle de verser le sang à son gré , sans en rendre la moindre raison ? Ce n'est pas l'usage , disent les juges. — Eh ! monstres ! il faut que cela devienne l'usage : vous devez compte aux hommes du sang des hommes. Le chancelier serait-il assez... pour ne pas faire venir la procédure !

Pour moi , je persiste à ne vouloir autre chose que la production publique de cette procédure. On imagine qu'il faut préalablement que cette pauvre femme fasse venir des pièces de Toulouse. Où les trouvera-t-elle ? Qui lui ouvrira l'ancre du greffe ? Où la renvoie-t-on , si elle est réduite à faire elle-même ce que

le magistrat ou le Conseil seul peut faire ? Je ne conçois pas l'idée de ceux qui conseillent cette pauvre infortunée.

Cet avis semblait cependant motivé. Voltaire avait adressé Mme Calas à d'Alembert pour qu'il dirigeât ses démarches, ce qu'il fit activement<sup>1</sup> et ensuite : M<sup>r</sup> Mariette, avocat au Conseil du roi. C'était devant ce Conseil seulement qu'elle pouvait appeler de la sentence d'une cour souveraine. Il fallait intenter un procès devant ce corps, qui était censé représenter directement le monarque. Voltaire prit à sa charge tous les frais. Mais dès le premier pas on se trouvait arrêté.

M<sup>r</sup> Mariette demande pour agir l'extrait de la procédure d'*Toulouse*. Le Parlement, qui paraît honteux de son jugement, défendu qu'on donnât communication des pièces et même de l'arrêt<sup>2</sup>. (A Audibert, 9 juillet.)

Ces paroles sont extraites d'une lettre à Audibert qui allait à Paris, et que Voltaire, comme nous l'avons vu, chargea de voir M. Calas et Lavaysse, afin de savoir si la veuve était dans le besoin. MM. Dufour, Mallet et Le Royer, banquiers, rue Montmartre, avaient consenti à ce qu'elle eût chez eux son domicile connu, et c'était par leurs mains que passait tout ce qu'on lui envoyait. Elle habitait sous le nom de *Mme Anne-Rose Dupuys, chez M. Caron, quai des Morfondus*. Elle trouva un utile appui au sein d'une famille Dumas, qui témoigna plus tard à ses filles comme à elle, la plus cordiale et la plus active sympathie.

1. Court de Gébelin, *Les Toulousaines*.

2. Ce fait qui, aujourd'hui, paraît à peine croyable, est vrai. On n'était pas même obligé, en ce temps de jugements secrets, de dire au public pourquoi on mettait un homme à mort. Amis et ennemis ignorèrent longtemps la teneur de l'arrêt, ce qui favorisait toutes les calomnies répandues contre les Calas, et rendait leur défense illusoire. « Au surplus je ne puis avoir l'honneur de vous adresser d'exemplaire de l'arrêt rendu contre Calas, puisqu'il n'a pas été imprimé; je n'ai pas même pu en avoir de copie, parce qu'on ne veut pas absolument qu'il paraisse. (28 avril 1762. — Lettre d'Amblard, subdélégué de Toulouse, à l'intendant de Languedoc ou à son secrétaire. *Arch. de Montpellier*.)

Voltaire écrivit le 15 mars 1763 à la veuve :

Je félicite M. Dumas, je l'embrasse de tout mon cœur ; je n'ai point de terme pour lui marquer mon estime (Collection de M. Fournier).

Plus d'une fois Voltaire dut rendre le courage à ceux même pour lesquels il se donnait tant de mouvement et de peine, excepté Mme Calas qui, une fois résolue, ne faiblit jamais. Il pria ses anges, M. et Mme d'Argental, de faire venir, d'interroger et d'encourager Lavaysse, qui était arrivé depuis peu, sous un faux nom.

Il est caché à Paris. Son malheureux père, qui craint de se compromettre avec le Parlement de Toulouse, tremble que son fils n'éclate contre ce même Parlement.

Voici en quels termes mystérieux, mais à la fois flatteurs et sévères, il gourmandait l'inaction et la prudence exagérée de Lavaysse père :

Les personnes qui protègent à Paris la famille Calas sont très-étonnées que le sieur Gobert Lavaisse ne fasse pas cause commune avec elles. Non-seulement il a son honneur à soutenir, ses fers à venger, le rapporteur qui conclut au bannissement à confondre, mais il doit la vérité au public et son secours à l'innocence. Le père se couvrirait d'une gloire immortelle s'il quittait une ville superstitieuse et un tribunal ignorant et barbare.

Un avocat savant et estimé est certainement au-dessus de ceux qui ont acheté pour un peu d'argent le droit d'être injustes ; un tel avocat serait un excellent conseiller ; mais où est le conseiller qui serait un bon avocat ?

M. Lavaisse peut être sûr que, s'il perd quelque chose à son déplacement, il le retrouvera au décuple. On répand que plusieurs princes d'Allemagne, plusieurs personnes de France, d'Angleterre et de Hollande vont faire un fonds très-considérable. Voilà de ces occasions où il serait bon de prendre un parti ferme. M. Lavaisse, en élevant la voix, n'a rien à craindre ; il fera rougir le Parlement de Toulouse, en quittant cette ville pour Paris ; et s'il veut aller ailleurs, il sera partout respecté.

Quoi qu'il arrive, son fils se rendrait très-suspect dans l'esprit des protecteurs des Calas, et ferait très-grand tort à la cause, s'il ne faisait pas son devoir, tandis que tant de personnes indifférentes font au-delà de leur devoir.

« Je prie la personne qui peut faire rendre cette lettre à M. La-  
vaissè père de l'envoyer promptement par une voie sûre. »

Malgré tant d'efforts, tant d'esprit et d'éloquence, Voltaire ne réussissait pas toujours dans ses tentatives. Ce fut en vain qu'il s'efforça d'obtenir de M. de Saint-Florentin une audience pour Mme Calas. Il s'abusait entièrement sur les dispositions de ce tyran de la France, obscur et dissimulé<sup>1</sup>; et nous pouvons en juger mieux que Voltaire nous qui avons lu trente à quarante de ses dépêches secrètes, où il parle, en mainte occasion, de l'affaire Calas. Il fut jusqu'au bout, et nous le prouverons par ses propres lettres, le protecteur actif et zélé des ennemis de Calas et de sa veuve<sup>2</sup>.

A son exemple, ces esprits étroits, si nombreux en tous temps, qui sont invariablement convaincus qu'un homme officiellement condamné le mérite; ces gens, qui peuvent être très-honnêtes, très-sincères, mais qui sont, avant tout, partisans de tout ce qui gouverne, étaient adversaires-nés de Mme Calas.

Ce déplorable esprit se trahit parfaitement dans une lettre inédite du duc de Villars à Voltaire<sup>3</sup>. Le duc avait été chargé par lui d'écrire au Ministre; il le pria seulement « de vouloir bien prendre connaissance des motifs de l'arrêt. »

C'est à peu près<sup>4</sup> ce que j'ai cru devoir dire à M. de Saint-Florentin; je n'ai pu lui assurer que l'arrêt était injuste, parce

1. « Vous savez sans doute que M. de Saint-Florentin a écrit à Toulouse et est très-bien disposé. » (A Argental, 14 juillet.) L'astucieux despote n'avait garde de s'attirer le mauvais vouloir d'un homme aussi redoutable que Voltaire l'était devenu par ses écrits et par ses hautes relations.

2. Voir quelques-unes de ces lettres à la fin du volume. *Pièces justif.*, x, xi, xvi, xviii, xxiii, xxvi, xxvii, xxix, xxx, et xxxi.

3. De la collection Lajariette de Nantes. Communiquée par MM. Read et Vaurigaud.

4. *A peu près*.... Nous avons lu cette lettre de Villars au ministre en date du 7 juillet. Elle est aussi peu favorable que possible aux Calas. C'est une de ces recommandations qui ne peuvent que nuire au recommandé.

que je ne le crois pas. Les pièces que vous m'avez envoyées et dont je vous remercie ne me font point changer de sentiment..... Je souhaite de me tromper en croyant que le fanatisme peut faire commettre les crimes les plus horribles et que treize juges ne condamnent pas unanimement un homme aux plus affreux supplices sans être bien assurés qu'il est coupable.

Inutile de dire qu'une négociation entreprise par un homme si mal disposé n'aboutit à rien. C'était d'ailleurs une puérilité que d'engager Saint-Florentin à prendre connaissance d'un arrêt qu'il avait pour ainsi dire inspiré. Il répondit le 17 juillet aux froides observations du duc en faveur des Calas :

Les voyes de droit leur sont ouvertes et ils peuvent les prendre s'ils le jugent à propos. Mais cette affaire ne me regarde en aucune façon.

Voltaire fut mieux inspiré lorsqu'il envoya Mme Calas remettre les *Pièces originales* au chancelier Lamoignon et à quelques autres personnages en place. Il l'adressa ensuite au célèbre avocat Élie de Beaumont<sup>1</sup>, avec une lettre où il lui disait :

Mandez moi, je vous prie, sur le champ les mesures qu'on peut prendre ; je me chargerai de la reconnaissance ; je serai heureux de l'exercer envers un talent aussi beau qu'est le vôtre. Ce procès, d'ailleurs si étrange et si capital, peut vous faire un honneur infini, et l'honneur dans votre noble profession amène tôt ou tard la fortune. Cette affaire, à laquelle je prends le plus vif intérêt est si extraordinaire qu'il faudra aussi des moyens extraordinaires. Soyez sûr que le Parlement de Toulouse ne donnera point des armes contre lui ; il a défendu que l'on communiquât les pièces à personne et même l'extrait de l'arrêt.

Bientôt l'arrivée d'un des accusés à Genève fournit au zèle de Voltaire des lumières nouvelles et l'aiguillonna encore. Pierre Calas, échappé le 4 juillet du couvent des dominicains de Toulouse, vint rejoindre son frère sur cette terre d'asile et de liberté que les protes-

1. Note 23, à la fin du volume.



tants persécutés en France considéraient depuis plus de deux cents ans comme leur refuge assuré et leur seconde patrie, quand la première les repoussait de son sein. Quelques jours après son arrivée, le 26 juillet, Voltaire écrivait à Audibert :

Nous avons ici Pierre Calas ; je l'ai interrogé pendant quatre heures ; je frémis et je pleure, mais il faut agir.

L'émotion chez Voltaire, même quand elle était sincère et sentie, ne jetait aucun trouble dans les idées. Quoique Pierre Calas l'eût touché, il le mit à l'épreuve, comme il avait fait pour son jeune frère. Interrogatoires, espionnage même, rien ne lui fut épargné. Il en rendit compte plus tard à M. de Crosne (le 30 janvier 1763) :

Pierre Calas, accusé d'un fratricide et qui en serait indubitablement coupable si son père l'eût été, demeure auprès de mes terres : je l'ai vu souvent. Je fus d'abord en défiance ; j'ai fait épier, pendant quatre mois, sa conduite et ses paroles ; elles sont de l'innocence la plus pure et de la douleur la plus vraie.

Vers la fin de juin, Voltaire avait commencé la publication des *Pièces Originales concernant la mort des sieurs Calas et le jugement rendu à Toulouse*<sup>1</sup>. Ce recueil ne contenait d'abord que deux documents, la simple et belle lettre de Mme Calas et une prétendue *lettre de Donat Calas fils à la dame veuve Calas, sa mère*, écrite bien certainement par Voltaire, mais peut-être sur les notes de M. de Végobre. La publication de ces pièces en France rencontra des obstacles. Il fallut l'intervention de l'abbé de Chauvelin, et ce ne fut pas sans peine qu'on obtint pour ces écrits une circulation à peu près libre<sup>2</sup>.

Peu après, le recueil de *Pièces* s'enrichit d'un *Mémoire*, sous le nom de *Donat Calas*, daté du 22 juillet,

1. *Bibliogr.* n<sup>os</sup> 14-25.

2. 18 juillet, à Damilaville ; 4 août, à d'Argental.

et d'une *Déclaration* de son frère *Pierre* sous la date du 23.

La composition du Mémoire, plus important que la Déclaration, avait été difficile pour Voltaire. Il fallait faire parler un protestant, et le faire parler devant la France catholique, telle que l'avait laissée Louis XIV. La tâche était délicate, impossible peut-être à Voltaire; en tout cas l'illustre incrédule y réussit fort mal; c'est une étrange chose que la religion protestante réduite par lui à *ce qu'elle peut avoir de plus raisonnable*, afin de *laisser aux convertisseurs catholiques une espérance de succès* ! Ces singulières expressions sont de lui, dans une lettre à son médecin Tronchin, qui a été publiée en 1856<sup>1</sup>.

Voici, mon cher grand homme, le mémoire tel qu'il est fait pour les catholiques; nous nous faisons tout à tous avec l'apôtre. Il m'a paru qu'un protestant ne devait pas désavouer sa religion, mais qu'il devait en parler avec modestie et commencer par désarmer, s'il est possible, les préjugés qu'on a en France contre le calvinisme, et qui pourraient faire un très-grand tort à l'affaire des Calas. Comptez qu'il y a des gens capables de dire : *qu'importe qu'on ait roué ou non un calviniste? c'est toujours un ennemi de moins dans l'État*. Soyez très-sûr que c'est ainsi que pensent plusieurs honnêtes ecclésiastiques. Il faut donc prévenir leurs cris par une exposition modeste de ce que la religion protestante peut avoir de plus raisonnable. Il faut que cette petite profession honnête et serrée laisse aux convertisseurs une espérance de succès.

La chute était délicate, mais je crois avoir observé les nuances.

Nous avons une viande plus crue pour les étrangers. Ce mémoire est pour la France et est au bain-marie.

C'est dans le même temps que l'infatigable écrivain, décidé à frapper sans relâche l'attention du public, fit paraître l'*Histoire d'Élisabeth Canning et de Jean Calas*<sup>2</sup>. Il se souvint, à propos, d'une scandaleuse affaire qui avait eu lieu pendant son séjour en Angleterre et où,

1. Dans un recueil que nous désignerons sous le nom de Recueil Cayrol. (2 vol. in-8. Voir *Bibliogr.* n° 53 )

2. *Bibliogr.* n° 25.

sur des indices, on s'était vu sur le point de prononcer une sentence injuste. Il rapprocha cette histoire de celle des Calas, qu'il raconta une fois de plus, avec des ressources toujours nouvelles de style, d'esprit et de bon sens. Ce ne fut pas la dernière fois.

Les trois écrits publiés sous le nom de Pierre et de Donat étaient datés de Chatelaine, village des environs de Genève.

Quand Voltaire était aux Délices, qu'il n'avait pas encore abandonnées définitivement pour Ferney, il avait auprès de lui, à Chatelaine, les fils de Calas, et il en profita pour les présenter aux visiteurs célèbres ou puissants qui accouraient de tous côtés pour le combler de leurs hommages.

Il les fit connaître à « une dame dont la générosité égale la haute naissance, qui était à Genève pour faire inoculer ses filles et qui fut la première à soulager cette famille infortunée. » C'était la duchesse d'Anville<sup>1</sup>. Il pouvait d'autant mieux l'intéresser à ses protégés qu'il était son hôte. Elle habita les Délices avec ses enfants.

C'est de Mme d'Anville qu'il disait plus tard<sup>2</sup> :

Des Français retirés dans ce pays la secondèrent. ; des Anglais qui voyageaient se signalèrent, et comme le dit M. de Beaumont, il y eut combat de générosité entre les deux nations à qui secourrait le mieux la vertu si cruellement opprimée.

Ces secours étaient indispensables pour donner à Mme Calas les moyens de se rendre à Paris et d'y vivre; chez elle, tout avait été saisi.

Plus tard, le maréchal de Richelieu et le duc de Villars virent les deux jeunes gens. Le pasteur Théodore (Chiron) rendit compte à Paul Rabaut de leur présentation à Richelieu (8 octobre).

M. de V. lui a présenté Pierre Calas en lui disant : Voici un

1. Note 24 à la fin du volume.

2. Lettre à M. d'Am....

débris de la triste famille. M. le duc lui dit : « Après M. de Voltaire, vous n'avez personne qui s'intéresse plus à vous que moi. » Je sais ceci de source et même que ce seigneur a écrit fortement à sa fille<sup>1</sup> pour l'engager à s'employer vivement à cette affaire.

Peu à peu, Voltaire réussit à enrôler dans la cause des Calas la duchesse de la Roche-Guyon, le duc d'Harcourt, bien d'autres encore, qui rapportèrent à Versailles quelque chose de l'enthousiasme du grand homme. « Pendant le plus fort de l'affaire Calas, » le marquis d'Argence de Dirac passa quatre mois chez Voltaire ; nous le verrons plus tard payer à son hôte un double tribut en publiant un écrit pour les Calas et contre Fréron, et Voltaire l'en remercier dans son *Ode à la Vérité*.

Ses ennemis ne s'endormaient pas et prenaient parti contre ses protégés. Il paraît qu'on envoya à une feuille anglaise, *the Saint-James Chronicle*, une lettre de lui à d'Alembert où l'on inséra des paroles plus que compromettantes contre le roi, les ministres, etc. Nous croyons que ces paroles n'étaient pas de lui, non parce qu'il le nie fort spirituellement<sup>2</sup>, ce qui lui arrive aussi bien quand il ment que lorsqu'il dit la vérité, mais parce qu'une pareille attaque eût nui gratuitement à la cause qu'il soutenait de toutes ses forces et de toute son habileté. C'eût été une maladresse, et il n'en faisait guère, à moins qu'il ne fût bien en colère, ce qui n'était pas le cas. Le duc de Grafton lui montra cette feuille. En même temps, M. de Choiseul à qui on l'avait adressée pour perdre Voltaire, la lui envoya ; il y répondit avec succès et se fit disculper par le *Journal Encyclopédique* dont on s'était servi contre lui<sup>3</sup>. Cette

1. Septimanie, comtesse d'Egmont.

2. « Si je vous avais écrit une pareille lettre, il faudrait me pendre à la porte des Petites-Maisons. »

3. Lettres du 20 août à Pierre Rousseau, du 17 octobre à d'Alembert, etc., etc.

attaque perfidement calculée aurait pu être fatale à son crédit et aux Calas.

Enfin parurent les *Mémoires* des avocats<sup>1</sup>. Voltaire combla d'éloges Élie de Beaumont (22 septembre) :

« J'ajoute aux trois impossibilités que vous mettez dans un *si* beau jour, une quatrième : c'est celle de résister à vos raisons. Je joins ma reconnaissance à celle que les Calas vous doivent. J'ose dire que les juges de Toulouse vous en doivent aussi ; vous les avez éclairé sur leurs fautes. »

Mais bientôt son œil vigilant trouva dans ce *Mémoire* des erreurs qu'il fit corriger avec le plus grand soin. Il était l'âme de toute cette affaire ; gouvernant tous ceux qu'il y employait, tantôt par les critiques les plus fines, les plus justes, les plus adroïtement présentées tantôt par des éloges comme ceux qu'on vient de lire et qui avaient tout l'éclat de la gloire, aux yeux de ce siècle dont il était l'oracle.

Ce *Mémoire* à la main, Mme Calas dut se présenter chez les grands du jour et aussi chez les arbitres de la publicité qui, dès cette époque, étaient comptés au rang des puissances de fait, sinon de droit.

Voltaire l'envoya chez Tronchin, chez Nicolai, premier président de la chambre des comptes ; chez Chaban, intendant des postes ; chez Ménard, premier commis de Saint-Florentin ; chez Héron, premier commis du Conseil ; chez Quesnay, le physiocrate ; chez le marquis de Gouvernet, qui était protestant ; chez le duc de la Vallière ; chez bien d'autres encore<sup>1</sup>. Il la recom-

1. Celui d'Élie de Beaumont parut signé de quinze avocats : Huart, l'Herminier, Gillot, Boys de Maisonneuve, Cellier, de Lambon, Boucher d'Argis, Duchasteau, Bigot de Sainte-Croix, Moreau, Dandasne, Raymond, Thevenot-Dessaulle, Doillot et Mallard ; ce dernier assista très-activement l'auteur de ce factum.

Le deuxième *Mémoire* d'Élie de Beaumont fut signé par MM. de Lambon, Mallard, d'Outremont, Mariette, Gerbier, Legouvé, Loyseau de Mauléon. Nous nous faisons un devoir de rappeler ces noms.

2. *Mémoire* de M. de V., du 14 juillet 1762, dans notre *Recueil*, p. 101 et passim.

manda à son neveu<sup>1</sup> qui, étant à la fois prêtre et magistrat, pouvait être très-utile aux accusés et le fut en effet.

D'Alembert fut profondément ému de cette visite ; voici en quels termes le géomètre de l'Encyclopédie en parlait à celui qui était leur maître à tous :

**V**ous devriez engager M. de Choiseul, puisqu'il vous écoute et vous aime, à accorder quelque protection aux pauvres roués de Toulouse. La veuve vint me voir il y a quelques jours et m'apporter son mémoire ; ce spectacle me fit grande pitié. Il ne faut pas se plaindre d'être malheureux quand on voit une famille qui l'est à ce point là. Je parlerai et crierai même en leur faveur ; c'est tout ce que je puis faire.

Les Mémoires de Mariette, de Loyseau de Mauléon, parurent à leur tour. Voltaire y répondit par ses applaudissements, dont tout Paris se faisait l'écho ; cependant Diderot les trouvait trop faibles<sup>2</sup> et Voltaire lui-même eut raison de regretter<sup>3</sup> que les premiers Mémoires de Sudre et de la Salle n'eussent pas été connus à temps, et mis en œuvre par les avocats de Paris, moins bien informés et plus diserts, mais non plus réellement éloquents.

Sans être sous l'influence directe de Voltaire, l'homme qui après lui eut le plus d'empire sur son siècle, Rousseau, avait rendu, lui aussi, un juste hommage à Jean Calas. Dans sa lettre célèbre à Christophe de Beaumont, archevêque de Paris, qui parut huit mois après la sanglante tragédie de Toulouse, on remarqua les lignes suivantes :

« Si la France eût professé la religion du vicaire Savoyard, sous nos yeux l'innocent Calas, torturé par les bourreaux, n'eût pas péri sous la roue. »

Chacune de ces publications gagnait dans le public de nouvelles sympathies aux Calas ; aussi leurs ennemis

1. A.-J. Mignot, abbé de Sellières, conseiller-clerc au Grand Conseil.

2. Note 25 à la fin du volume.

3. Notre Recueil. Lettre à Moulou, 9 janvier 1763.

tentèrent-ils un coup hardi contre leurs défenseurs. Le J<sup>ur</sup>ésidial de Montpellier fit saisir les Mémoires des trois <sup>io</sup> avocats, non sans l'approbation empressée de M. de <sup>b</sup> Saint-Florentin<sup>1</sup>. Voltaire en fut indigné, mais il vit <sup>iv</sup> dans ce fait un signe de l'effet produit par ces chaleu-<sup>u</sup>reux plaidoyers.

... Si les avocats n'ont plus le droit de plaider il n'y aura donc <sup>no</sup> plus de droit ni de loi en France. Je m'imagine que ces trois <sup>io</sup> Messieurs ne souffriront point un tel outrage. Il n'appartient <sup>ne</sup> qu'aux juges devant qui l'on plaide de supprimer un factum en le <sup>le I</sup> déclarant injurieux et abusif... J'espère surtout que cette démar-<sup>18</sup>che du présidial de Montpellier, commandée par le parlement de <sup>b</sup> Toulouse, sera une excellente pièce en faveur des Calas (1<sup>er</sup> fév. <sup>vè</sup> 1763).

Si elle était dictée en effet par le Parlement toulou-<sup>u</sup>sain, cette mesure étrange prouvait la crainte que lui <sup>iu</sup> inspirait la parole populaire et admirée des meilleurs <sup>27</sup> avocats de Paris, réunis contre lui; et si cette Cour <sup>tu</sup> n'avait pas ordonné l'acte de Montpellier, il indiquait <sup>ti</sup> dans la magistrature un esprit de corps, contraire aux <sup>xx</sup> intérêts de la justice et de la vérité. Cet esprit régnait <sup>ti</sup> même à Paris, et d'Alembert raconte à Voltaire un mot <sup>to</sup> scandaleux à ce sujet :

Croiriez-vous qu'un conseiller en parlement disait, il y a quel-<sup>I</sup>ques jours, à un des avocats de la veuve Calas, que sa requête <sup>ne</sup> ne <sup>de</sup> serait point admise, parce qu'il y avait en France plus de magis-<sup>es</sup>trats que de Calas? (12 janv. 1763.)

La requête de M<sup>e</sup> Mariette au Conseil du Roi avait <sup>it</sup> été présentée. La question était de savoir si elle serai <sup>it</sup> admise. L'impatience dévorait Voltaire.

Eh bien ! écrit-il à Argental le 27 février, a-t-on enfin rapport <sup>é</sup> l'affaire des Calas? Je vois qu'il est beaucoup plus aisé de roue <sup>r</sup> un homme que d'admettre une requête.

C'est à ce temps d'anxiété et d'irritation qu'il fau <sup>u</sup>

1. Pièces justif. xxix et xxx.

rapporter, si elle est vraie, une anecdote tout à fait caractéristique :

Il ne souffrait aucune contradiction sur ce sujet, et un visiteur en fut un jour la victime. C'était un gros seigneur allemand qui, sorti des solitudes d'une lointaine résidence, connaissait fort peu les événements du jour. Il est introduit dans le salon de Ferney, et, immédiatement après les premières révérences : « Monsieur, lui dit Voltaire, que pensez-vous du pauvre Calas qui a été roué? — Il a été roué .. Ah! il faut que ce soit un grand coquin! » Voltaire se précipite sur la sonnette. — Le carrosse de Monsieur est-il dans la cour? — Oui, Monsieur. — Qu'on attelle à l'instant ses chevaux et qu'il parte! Le pauvre allemand s'en fut, sans pouvoir s'expliquer cette boutade. Lorsqu'il la raconta à Genève, on lui fit comprendre le sujet de l'indignation de Voltaire, et il déclara qu'il avait pris Calas pour quelque brigand que le seigneur de Ferney avait fait rouer à bon escient<sup>1</sup>.

En attendant, Voltaire ne négligeait rien.

Il refaisait au dernier moment le compte de ses alliés et de ses agents, comme un général passe ses troupes en revue, une dernière fois, avant de les mener à l'ennemi. Trois des ministres étaient pour les Calas.

« Je suis sûr que le contrôleur général<sup>2</sup>, M. le duc de Praslin<sup>3</sup> M. le duc de Choiseul<sup>4</sup> ont de très-bonnes intentions; il faut assurément en profiter<sup>5</sup>. »

Il écrivait lettre sur lettre au rapporteur, M. de Crosne<sup>6</sup>, à son beau-père, M. de la Michodière, à M. d'Aguesseau, ne se lassant jamais de raconter comment il a connu les Calas et formé lentement sa conviction : « J'ose, dit-il, être sûr de l'innocence de cette famille comme de mon existence. » Pour s'en convaincre da-

1. Gaberel : *Voltaire et les Genevois*, p. 57.

2. H. L. J. B. Bertin fut contrôleur général des finances depuis le 21 nov. 1759, jusqu'au 12 déc. 1763.

3. Ministre des affaires étrangères.

4. Ministre de la marine.

5. Lettre à Moulton du 26 février 1763.

6. Louis Thiroux de Crosne, maître des requêtes, devint intendant à Rouen, puis en 1789 lieutenant de police à Paris, et mourut sur l'échafaud en 1794.



avantage encore, ou peut-être pour calmer son impatience fiévreuse, il avait fait un travail singulier dont il rendit compte à Damilaville avec l'extrême vivacité que prenait son style dans ses moments d'agitation :

Je me suis avisé de mettre par écrit toutes les raisons qui pourraient justifier ces juges ; je me suis distillé la tête pour trouver de quoi les excuser, et je n'ai trouvé que de quoi les excimer<sup>1</sup>.

Enfin parut, non pas encore le grand jour de la justice, mais la première lueur de l'aube.

Le mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mars, le bureau des Cassations, au Conseil, jugea la requête des Calas *admissible*. C'était le premier pas dans la voie de l'équité et de la réhabilitation.

1. Ce mot si dur est écrit *ab irato*. Moins courroucé, plus tard, il reconnut, en comparant l'affaire des Calas à celle des Sirven, « que les juges des Calas pouvaient au moins alléguer quelques faibles et malheureux prétextes (A. M. Chardon, 2 février 1767). » Il écrivit le 25 janvier 1775 à Mme Du Deffand : « Les juges des Calas s'étaient trompés sur les apparences et avaient été coupables de bonne foi. » Il alla beaucoup plus loin encore en s'adressant à un prêtre Toulousain, suivant son habitude de *se faire tout à tous*, dans un bien autre sens que l'apôtre qu'il aimait citer à ce propos. (A. M. l'abbé Audra, 4 septembre 1769. Voir sur cet abbé la note 26 à la fin du volume. )

« J'ai toujours été convaincu, lui écrit-il, qu'il y avait dans l'affaire des Calas de quoi excuser les juges. Les Calas étaient très-innocents ; cela est démontré. Mais ils s'étaient contredits. Ils avaient été assez imbéciles pour vouloir sauver d'abord le prétendu honneur de Marc-Antoine leur fils et pour dire qu'il est mort d'apoplexie lorsqu'il est évident qu'il s'est défait lui-même.

« C'est une aventure abominable ; mais on ne peut reprocher aux juges que d'avoir trop cru les apparences. »

## CHAPITRE XI.

### RÉVISION DU PROCÈS ET RÉHABILITATION DES CONDAMNÉS

..... *Longa est injuria, longæ  
Ambages....*

(VIRG., *Æn.* I, 341.)

Trois jours avant l'anniversaire du supplice de Calas, le lundi 7 mars 1763, le Grand Conseil prononça sur la Requête de Mariette. C'était déjà un avantage considérable que ce corps nombreux et élevé jugeât la question de la révision; cet avantage était dû à M. de Choiseul. La cause des Calas avait pris dans l'opinion publique une haute importance. On s'intéressait partout à leurs malheurs; on sentait qu'une grande réparation leur était due. En outre, c'était un acte extrême et très-rare du pouvoir royal que de casser l'arrêt d'une Cour souveraine; et cet acte, par égard pour ceux même dont il condamnait la sentence, ne pouvait s'accomplir avec trop d'éclat et de retentissement. Le Conseil siégeait d'ordinaire par semestres; cette fois, les deux semestres furent réunis. Tous les ministres et ministres d'État firent partie de l'assemblée, et le chancelier de France la présida. Les conseillers d'État, de robe, d'épée et d'église, étaient présents, et parmi ces

derniers, plusieurs abbés et trois évêques<sup>1</sup>. Cependant la sentence fut rendue à l'unanimité des quatre-vingt-quatre membres présents, conformément aux conclusions de M. Thiroux de Crosne, maître des Requêtes, rapporteur<sup>2</sup>. Pendant la séance, la galerie des Glaces à Versailles était pleine d'une foule impatiente de recevoir la grande nouvelle.

Au lieu de raconter nous-même cette scène imposante et pleine d'émotion, nous citerons ici le récit d'un témoin oculaire<sup>3</sup>.

Le 8 mars 1763.

L'affaire de Mme Calas fut jugée hier au conseil; je fus avec elle à Versailles, avec plusieurs autres messieurs, chez les ministres; l'accueil qu'ils lui firent fut des plus favorables; on ne la fit attendre aucune part; aussitôt qu'elle se présentait, on ouvrait les deux battants; tout le monde la consolait de son mieux. M. le chancelier lui dit : « Votre affaire est des plus intéressantes, madame; on prend beaucoup de part à votre situation; nous souhaitons bien que vous trouviez parmi nous des consolations à vos maux. » L'accueil de M. le duc de Praslin fut des plus gracieux. Elle se rendit à la galerie avec ses demoiselles, pour voir passer le roi; elle fut accostée par plusieurs seigneurs; le duc d'A ..., le comte de Noailles, qui furent du nombre, lui promirent de la faire remarquer au roi; ils lui fixèrent sa place, mais leur bonne volonté n'eut point d'effet; comme le roi était à portée de la voir, une personne de sa suite se laissa tomber, et attira par sa chute les regards de la cour et du roi<sup>4</sup> : tout cela se passa le

1. Lettres VI et VII de Voltaire à Ribotte. (Bulletin de la Soc. d'Hist. du Prot., t. IV, p. 253).

2. Selon Grimm, 20 conseillers d'État avaient proposé d'abord « d'ordonner seulement la révision du procès, par une sorte de ménagement pour une cour souveraine, telle que le parlement de Toulouse. Tous les autres ont opiné pour la cassation pure et simple, qui est la forme la plus désobligeante. Aucun n'a douté un instant que l'arrêt ne fût de toute nullité. »

3. Une copie de cette lettre s'est trouvée parmi quelques papiers relatifs aux Calas, qui furent confiés au pasteur Marron par Nanette Calas, alors Mme Duvoisin. Cette pièce, et quelques autres que j'indiquerai, furent publiées en 1819 par mon oncle Charles Coquerel dans les *Annales Protestantes*, dont il était rédacteur, recueil devenu assez rare aujourd'hui. Cette lettre écrite par une main naïve et peu exercée, est d'autant plus digne d'intérêt. Serait-elle de Lavaysse?

4. Il est permis de douter que cette chute fût involontaire. Voltaire,

dimanche. Le lundi matin, Mme Calas fut, vers les neuf heures, se constituer prisonnière<sup>1</sup>. On avait tout préparé : l'écrou fut daté, signé et porté au rapporteur ; les jeunes demoiselles allèrent à l'entrée du conseil se présenter à leurs juges ; le nombre en fut prodigieux, et l'assistance des ministres rendit ce conseil encore plus brillant : la requête fut admise tout d'une voix. On a ordonné l'apport de la procédure, des informations et des motifs. L'avocat n'avait pas osé demander les originaux de la procédure, il eût été à craindre qu'on ne les refusât ; je ne pense pas que c'eût tiré à conséquence. L'aînée des demoiselles Calas se trouva mal pendant le temps du conseil ; elle eut une vapeur très-considérable et très-longue : elle durait encore, lorsque ces messieurs, étant sortis, vinrent lui annoncer la réussite de ses entreprises ; une partie s'empressa de lui donner des secours ; des eaux spiritueuses, des sels, des flacons de toute espèce furent prodigués : je reçus les plus grandes politesses de plusieurs de

dès qu'il fût question de cet essai de présentation au roi, n'en espérait rien. « Soyez persuadé, écrivait-il à Debrus, que Sa Majesté est l'homme du royaume qui influe le moins sur cette affaire ; il ne s'en mêle ni ne s'en mêlera ; il laissera agir la Commission du Conseil et dira seulement un mot comme les autres. » (Notre recueil, p. 124.) C'était encore trop attendre de Louis XV. Il n'alla ni au Conseil privé ni au grand Conseil, et ne dit pas même un mot comme les autres. Voltaire avait trop raison de s'écrier : « Le torrent des affaires publiques empêche que l'on ne fasse attention aux affaires des particuliers, et quand on rouerait cent pères de famille dans le Languedoc, Versailles n'y prendrait que très-peu de part (ib., p. 144). » Pour Louis XV, on sait que ce n'était pas même le torrent des affaires publiques qui le rendait profondément indifférent aux malheurs privés.

Du reste, cette journée parut excellente à Voltaire pour la cause à laquelle il se dévouait. « Ce qui augmente ma joie et mes espérances, mande-t-il à Debrus, c'est l'attendrissement universel dans la galerie de Versailles (ib., p. 210). » Rien ne prouve, d'ailleurs, que Louis XV ait pris personnellement aucun intérêt aux Calas. Il est certain que ce n'est pas lui (comme on le prétend) qui répondit à l'excuse banale qu'on invoquait au profit du parlement de Toulouse : « Il n'est si bon cheval qui ne bronche. — Un cheval, soit, mais toute une écurie ! » — Grimm (Corr. litt., 15 juin 1764) cite le mot, mais en l'attribuant à une dame.

1. On pourrait conclure de ce récit que Mme Calas fut incarcérée à Versailles ; mais nous n'avons vu nulle part aucune trace de ce fait, tandis que dans ses papiers se trouve, à la suite de l'acte officiel constatant que son écrou et celui des autres accusés a été biffé à la Conciergerie du Palais, une pièce toute pareille d'après laquelle un écrou semblable, mais concernant Mme Calas seule et dont on ne donne pas la date, a été biffé au grand Châtelet. C'est donc là qu'elle attendit l'arrêt du Conseil. — Coll. de M. Fournier.

ces messieurs. L'intendant de Soissons, entre autres, et M. Astruc, m'en firent beaucoup. La charité de ces messieurs ne s'borna pas à Mlle Calas; ils s'empressèrent beaucoup d'obtenir l'acte d'élargissement de Mme Calas. On remarqua dans leur façon d'agir combien ils étaient pénétrés du malheur de cette famille et indignés de l'injustice qu'on lui avait faite.

L'arrêt d'élargissement prononcé, nous fîmes sortir Mme Calas de la prison, où elle était dans une ample bergère, auprès d'un grand feu; le geôlier lui avait fait servir le matin du café au lait, du chocolat et un bouillon, c'étaient ses ordres; mais nous fûmes bien surpris de sa belle réponse lorsqu'on lui demanda combien il lui fallait : « Mme Calas, dit-il, est trop malheureuse, je serais bien fâché de prendre le moindre salaire; j'aimerais avoir un ministère plus agréable pour lui offrir mes services; personne ne la respecte plus que moi. » Quel contraste avec le peuple de Toulouse! Les domestiques de tous ses juges, de tous ses protecteurs, la regardent avec admiration et respect : il n'en est aucun qui n'ait lu tous ses mémoires.

Ajoutons à ces détails que la reine se fit présenter Mme Calas et ses filles, et les reçut avec de gracieux témoignages d'estime et de sympathie<sup>1</sup>.

Le récit qu'on vient de lire est inexact en un point. Le roi en son Conseil ordonnait au parlement de Toulouse de lui faire envoyer les charges et informations par le greffier en chef et les motifs de la sentence par le procureur général. C'est donc bien la procédure entière qui était demandée, et, de plus, les motifs du jugement, toujours secrets alors.

On dit que le parlement fit cette réponse insolente et brève :

La procédure est très-volumineuse; on (Mme Calas) n'a qu'à envoyer du papier et de l'argent pour les copistes, et on (le parlement) la donnera; quant aux motifs, le conseil les trouvera dans les charges.

La colère fut très-violente à Toulouse. On y soutenait qu'une Cour souveraine était irresponsable, repré-

1. Lettres de la sœur Fraisse, le 22 juin, et de Voltaire à Damilaville, le 27 mars.

sentait le roi et ne pouvait voir ses arrêts cassés, fût-ce par lui-même. Il est certain que, dans un régime libre, la justice doit être et demeurer absolument indépendante du souverain, et ses arrêts être respectés et subis par lui comme par tout autre. Mais sous le despotisme, cette nécessaire indépendance est impossible et n'exista jamais, fût-elle écrite dans la lettre des lois. Or, elle ne l'était point à cette époque ou ne l'était qu'avec des exceptions, restrictions, et coutumes contraires, qui justifiaient le Conseil.

Duroux, qui avait la procuration de Mme Calas, lui écrivit que le greffier demandait vingt-cinq mains de papier timbré et que les frais de la copie s'élèveraient à 40 pistoles au moins (20 avril 1763, coll. de M. Fournier). « Quoi, s'écria Voltaire à cette nouvelle, quoi, dans le dix-huitième siècle, dans le temps que la philosophie et la morale instruisent les hommes, on roue un innocent à la majorité de huit voix contre cinq, et on exige 1500 livres pour transcrire le griffonnage d'un abominable tribunal<sup>1</sup>. » — Le conseil de Mme Calas jugera sans doute que l'ordre a été donné par le roi au parlement de Toulouse d'envoyer au roi la copie des procédures et non pas de les envoyer à la veuve; donc ce n'est pas à elle de payer l'obéissance que le parlement de Toulouse doit au roi.... Les juges de Toulouse rouent et le greffier écorche; c'est donc ainsi que la justice est faite »<sup>2</sup>.

Messieurs du parlement trouvèrent une consolation étrange auprès de l'archevêque de Toulouse<sup>3</sup> qui, apparemment pour rémunérer leur zèle et les consoler de leurs humiliations, accorda à chacun d'eux le singulier privilège « de faire célébrer la messe dans leurs maisons les jours de dimanche. » Après leur avoir oc-

1. Notre recueil, l. LXXXIII.

2. Id., l. LXXXIV.

3. Arthur-Richard Dillon.

troyé cette faveur insolite, le prélat craignit cependant que son zèle ne parût intempestif au gouvernement. Il rendit compte de ce qu'il avait fait à M. de Saint-Florentin et reçut de lui une réponse assez sèche qui évidemment blâmait, quoique avec une grande réserve, ce acte fort impolitique, dans un pays où la population protestante était nombreuse et n'avait que trop à se plaindre de l'entente cordiale de ses juges avec le clergé catholique.

« Sa Majesté m'a témoigné que, sur une pareille matière, elle ne pouvait s'en rapporter qu'à votre prudence et à la connaissance que vous avez, tant des règles et des usages de l'Église que des différentes impressions que les esprits des peuples confiés à vos soins sont capables de recevoir<sup>1</sup>. »

Tandis que le parlement avait grand besoin, pour se consoler, des faveurs de l'archevêché, Voltaire fut comblé de joie par ce premier triomphe qui semblait assurer tous les autres. Il faut l'entendre s'écrier avec une noble satisfaction dans une lettre à Damilaville :

Mon cher frère, il y a donc de la justice sur la terre; il y a donc de l'humanité! Les hommes ne sont pas tous de méchants coquins comme on le dit.

Il semble que l'émotion le rende modeste, car il ajoute « C'est le jour de votre triomphe, mon cher frère; vous avez servi les Calas mieux que personne. » Ses remerciements à Thiroux de Crosne sont enthousiastes et flatteurs :

Monsieur, vous vous êtes couvert de gloire, et vous avez donné de vous la plus haute idée.... Je vous respecte et je prends la liberté de vous aimer.

Il se croyait au bout de ses peines et Mme Calas au terme de ses agitations :

1. Cette lettre, que nous avons lue dans les *Dépêches du Secrétariat* (Arch. Imp.) et le fait très-curieux qui en fut l'occasion, n'avaient jamais été publiés, à notre connaissance.

Il me semble, écrit-il à Élie de Beaumont le 14 mars, que le reste de ce procès ne consistera qu'en formalités. La falsification des pièces n'est point à craindre, parce qu'elles sont signées de Pierre Calas, qui ira à Paris quand il le faudra, et qui reconnaîtrait bien vite la fraude.

Il écrit à Mme Calas :

.... Observez, madame, que l'ordre donné au parlement de Toulouse, d'envoyer les motifs, est une espèce de flétrissure pour lui, et que cet article vous donne une victoire entière; aussi n'a-t-il pas passé d'une voix unanime, comme l'ordre d'envoyer les procédures. Regardez donc votre mari et votre famille comme entièrement justifiés aux yeux du roy, du Conseil et de toute l'Europe. Le reste ne sera qu'une discussion de procédures, et ne consistera que dans des formes juridiques; et, quelque chose qui arrive, soyez très-sûre que tout le public sera pour vous<sup>1</sup>.

Mais les formalités pouvaient traîner en longueur. Le parlement pouvait se montrer récalcitrant, et l'envoi, très-coûteux, des pièces pouvait être entravé. C'est ce qui arriva.

Aussi Voltaire dut s'imposer encore de longues précautions, une réserve toujours calculée. Son *Traité sur la Tolérance à l'occasion de la mort de Jean Calas* était écrit, imprimé, et allait paraître; mais il craignit que le scandale de ce livre ne nuisît à la cause et il ne voulut pas exposer la veuve du martyr à expier ses hardiesses. Il se contenta d'en envoyer de rares exemplaires à deux ou trois ministres sur lesquels il comptait, à quelques conseillers d'État, à Mme de Pompadour, à Frédéric II, et à un petit nombre d'amis prudents, qui promettaient de ne pas les laisser tomber entre les mains avides des libraires, ou sous les regards dangereux de la censure<sup>2</sup>. Il imposait la même abnégation à tous ses alliés dans cette guerre aussi savante qu'humaine. Court de Gébelin avait écrit ses *Lettres Toulousaines* où il protestait contre les supplices de

1. Extrait d'une lettre inédite, en date du 15 mars 1763 (Collection de M. Fournier.)

2. A Moulou, mai 1762.



Rochette, des frères de Grenier, de Jean Calas, et racontait l'histoire de l'inquisition et des confréries de Pénitents à Toulouse; ouvrage curieux par les faits qu'il réunit, mais entaché de déclamation d'un bout l'autre. Ce livre ne pouvait qu'irriter les Toulousains, leurs Capitouls, les membres de leur parlement; Voltaire y fit mettre plusieurs cartons et obtint de l'auteur qu'il en retardât la publication<sup>1</sup>.

Ces habiles ménagements eurent un plein succès. N'ayant aucun prétexte pour désobéir, le parlement obéit. Enfin, écrit Voltaire au pasteur Vernes, le 24 mars 1763,

Enfin, l'infâme procédure des infâmes juges de Toulouse est partie ou part cette semaine. Nous espérons que l'affaire sera jugée au grand Conseil où nous aurons bonne justice, après quoi j'en mourrai content.

*N. B.* Le parlement de Toulouse ayant roué le père à écorcher la mère. Il a fallu payer cher l'extradition des pièces; mais tout cela est fait par la justice. Ah! *Manigoldi*<sup>2</sup>!

C'était encore annoncer deux mois trop tôt l'envoi de la procédure, qui ne partit de Toulouse que vers la fin de juillet. Louis se rendit à Paris en même temps peut-être fut-il chargé de remettre à sa mère les actes qui avaient été transcrits sur la requête de Mme Calas et à ses frais<sup>3</sup>.

Qui ne croirait, au moins, à cette date, que la pauvre veuve et son ardent défenseur touchent au but? Il fallut encore un an avant que les cruelles sentences

1. A Damilaville, 28 mars 1763. Il offrit à plusieurs reprises d'indemniser Gêbelin de sa bourse, et par une souscription entre quelques amis peu nombreux. (Notre recueil, p. 89.)

2. Bourreaux!

3. Lettre de la sœur Fraisse, du 3 août. Elle accuse Louis de ce retard; au moins en était-il complice. Il lui avait affirmé que depuis deux mois les pièces étaient à Paris. Les ennemis acharnés de sa famille avaient pu abuser encore de sa faiblesse, pour entraver l'action de la justice. Il était seul à Toulouse pour représenter les siens et agir dans leur intérêt.

de Toulouse fussent cassées et mises à néant. Pé-  
nibles pour ses amis, tous ces délais étaient cruels  
pour elle.

Ces longueurs inévitables, écrit-elle <sup>1</sup>, me déssépère et sy je  
navez la douce satisfaction d'avoir mes filles auprès de moy, je  
croy que je succomberai sou le poix de mes peines.

Ce fut le 4 juin 1764 que l'arrêt de cassation fut pro-  
noncé par le Conseil privé du roi.

*Le Roy en son conseil*, après avoir cassé pour vices de  
forme, la sentence des Capitouls du 27 octobre 1761 <sup>2</sup>,  
l'arrêt du parlement du 9 mars 1762 <sup>3</sup> et celui du 18  
mars, même année <sup>4</sup>, « a évoqué à soi et son Conseil  
le procès criminel jugé par lesdits arrêts, et icelui,  
circonstances et dépendances, a renvoyé et renvoie  
aux sieurs maîtres des requêtes de l'hôtel au Souve-  
rain. »

Tel était le nom technique et barbare d'un tribunal  
composé des maîtres des requêtes et qui avait été éta-  
bli pour rendre compte au Souverain des requêtes de son  
hôtel, c'est-à-dire de celles qui provenaient des gens de  
sa maison et (par extension) toutes celles dont il lui plai-  
sait de se réserver la connaissance <sup>5</sup>. Tout était à re-  
commencer devant ces juges, derniers et définitifs; mais  
devant eux la nouvelle procédure ne devait pas lan-  
guir; elle ne dura que neuf mois sous la direction labo-  
rieuse et intelligente de Dupleix de Bacquencourt,  
maître des requêtes.

Nous serons très-brefs sur ce dernier procès qui abou-  
tit à un cinquième jugement. Les mêmes faits se repro-

1. Lettre inédite à Cazeing fils aîné (communiquée par M. L. Destremx).

2. C'était celle qui envoyait à la torture Calas, sa femme et son fils,  
et ordonnait que les deux autres accusés seraient seulement présentés à  
la question.

3. Arrêt de mort de Jean Calas.

4. Bannissement de Pierre et acquittement des autres prévenus.

5. Voy. François Blanchard. — Les Maîtres des requêtes de l'Hôtel du  
Roy, 1670, in-f°.

duisirent; mais, cette fois, les Calas et leurs défenseurs pouvaient agir au grand jour; ce furent leurs ennemis qui se cachèrent. Les premiers tinrent chez le comte d'Argental une assemblée à laquelle Mme Calas fut admise, où l'on délibéra sur les mesures à prendre, et qui se renouvela chaque fois que les nécessités de la défense l'exigèrent<sup>1</sup>.

Pendant ce temps Voltaire recevait de Toulouse les lettres anonymes les plus violentes. On y reprochait au parlement de n'avoir pas fait rouer les cinq accusés au lieu d'un seul<sup>2</sup>.

Je crois que, s'ils me tenaient, ils pourraient bien me faire payer pour les Calas. J'ai eu bon nez, de toutes façons, de choisir mon camp sur la frontière.

Disons-le cependant, sinon à la décharge de ces magistrats, au moins pour rendre intelligible leur monstrueux aveuglement, dans cette dernière information produisirent, pour la première fois, bien des témoignages favorables, que la rédaction inique de leur Monitoire et de leurs Briefs Intendits avaient rendus impossibles ou que leurs nombreux actes d'intimidation avaient empêchés. Ce fut seulement alors qu'on put produire les dépositions écrites de huit négociants de Genève<sup>3</sup>, qui avaient connu depuis longtemps la famille Calas, celle plus importantes encore d'Alquier et du chanoine Azimond<sup>4</sup>; ce fut alors, que les onze faits justificatifs qu'on n'avait point permis à Sudre de prouver purent être démontrés, ou du moins ceux d'entre eux dont le temps n'avait pas emporté tout vestige. On put faire

1. Voltaire à Argental, 24 juin 1764.

2. A Damilaville et Argental, le 29 juin. A d'Alembert, le 10 juillet.

3. Debrus, Jean et Philippe des Arts, Cathala, Roger, Prades, Calvet Languier. Ces signatures étaient certifiées par le secrétaire d'État J. de Chapeaurouge et le résident de France Montpeyroux.

4. Voir celle d'Alquier, p. 49, celle d'Azimond, p. 63.

connaître la lettre où Marc-Antoine se plaignait à Ca-zeing de son frère Louis et l'appelait *notre déserteur*. On put prouver par un certificat du curé de Brassac que Marc-Antoine était à Brassac dès la veille de Noël et y resta jusqu'au lendemain de la fête, tandis que ce jour même on disait l'avoir vu à Toulouse dans le confessionnal de l'abbé Laplaigne; et, par un certificat du curé de Béziers, que Catherine Daumière était catholique de naissance et non *nouvelle convertie*, ce qui réduisait toute sa déposition à un impudent mensonge. Dire que si le parlement de Toulouse avait eu ces preuves sous les yeux il aurait jugé autrement, ce ne serait point le disculper, car il n'avait tenu qu'à lui de les avoir; on l'en avait supplié en vain et de mille manières, ne fût-ce que dans les quatre Mémoires de Sudre et de La Salle.

Il fallut publier des Mémoires nouveaux. Élie de Beaumont en donna un troisième, Mariette un quatrième, le jeune Lavaysse un second. Voltaire loua justement ce dernier dans une lettre à d'Argental :

Oui, sans doute, mon ange adorable, j'ai été infiniment touché du Mémoire du jeune Lavaysse, de sa simplicité attendrissante, de cette vérité sans ostentation qui n'appartient qu'à la vertu.

Il écrivit avec grâce à Élie de Beaumont (le 27 février 1766) :

Mes yeux ne peuvent guère lire, Monsieur; mais ils peuvent encore pleurer, et vous m'en avez fait bien apercevoir.

Dans ces Mémoires, il fallut combattre les calomnies sans cesse renaissantes qui ne cessaient de surgir de tous côtés et qui, à l'approche du moment décisif, prirent, même à Paris, un nouveau degré d'acharnement.

On disait qu'une fosse avait été préparée dans la

cave de la maison des Calas<sup>1</sup>; qu'un piton à la voûte de cette cave avait servi à pendre Marc-Antoine; qu'on avait vu monter le cadavre de la cave au magasin. Il y avait à Paris, disait-on, quelqu'un qui avait connaissance personnelle de tel ou tel de ces faits. Élie Beaumont demanda en vain que ce témoin insaisissable voulût bien se faire connaître; rien ne parut.

Avant même de réhabiliter le martyr, le Ministre qui avait approuvé sa mort fut obligé de châtier le premier et le plus acharné de ses persécuteurs. David fut destitué en février 1765<sup>2</sup>.

C'est à Paris que la cause fut jugée en dernier ressort. Les accusés (car ils l'étaient de nouveau) allèrent dès le 28 février<sup>3</sup>, s'enfermer à la Conciergerie. Ils y reçurent, dit Grimm, nombre de personnes de la première distinction. Damilaville les y visita et en rendit compte à Voltaire dans une lettre qui n'a pas été publiée<sup>4</sup>.

« J'ai passé, dit-il, deux heures aujourd'hui en prison avec Mme Calas et ses infortunés compagnons. Je les ai été consolant plusieurs fois depuis qu'ils y sont. Je ne suis pas le seul; bien d'autres gens de bien en ont fait autant, et j'ai vu avec une grande satisfaction qu'il y avait encore de la vertu et de l'honnêteté dans le monde. Ils sortiront après-demain; du moins je l'espère<sup>5</sup>. »

1. Ce mensonge n'était pas nouveau; voici comment Calas en fit justice dans un de ses interrogatoires (Arch. Imp.) :

« INTERROGÉ s'il n'est vrai qu'ayant prémédité la mort de son fils, il avait fait faire dans la cave une fosse pour l'enterrer,  
RÉPOND et dénie l'interrogatoire et dit qu'on n'a qu'à visiter la cave. »

2. Voir plus haut, p. 33.

3. Cette date se trouve dans une lettre inédite de Court de Gébelles à M. Polier de Bottens, 10 mars (communiquée par M. le Pasteur Frossard).

4. Et qui, sauf ce seul passage, ne mérite pas de l'être (Collecton Lajariette à Nantes). Elle est du 7 mars 1765.

5. Nous avons entre les mains la copie d'une lettre de félicitations emphatiques adressée à Mme Calas par le Lieutenant général du guet au moment où elle sortit de prison. Nous en citerons une seule phrase qui

es maîtres des requêtes, qui jugèrent cette grande affaire, étaient au nombre de quarante. On comptait parmi eux quatorze intendants de province. Ils examinèrent l'affaire dans le plus grand détail, en six séances de quatre heures chacune, sauf la dernière qui dura du double. L'arrêt fut rendu à l'unanimité le 9 mars 1765, trois ans, jour pour jour, après l'arrêt de mort de Jean Calas<sup>1</sup>.

Le jugement fut immédiatement mis sous presse à l'imprimerie Royale et publié en tous formats. Il réhabilitait les accusés et la mémoire de Jean Calas ; ordonnait que leurs noms fussent effacés des registres et des procès-verbaux, et le jugement actuel inscrit en marge ; les condamnés étaient libérés, ainsi que tous les enfants de Calas, de payer des dommages-intérêts auprès de qui de droit ; et donnait la mise en liberté des prévenus reconnus innocents<sup>2</sup>.

Les acquittés et tous les enfants de Jean Calas avaient demandé l'autorisation *de prendre à partie et dommages-intérêts* les magistrats qui avaient condamné à mort un innocent maintenant réhabilité. Sur ce point grave et délicat, les nouveaux juges « les ont renvoyés et ordonné à se pourvoir ainsi qu'ils aviseront. »

Un des maîtres des requêtes, M. Fargès, était d'avis d' pousser beaucoup plus loin la rigueur contre les pre-

« un hommage à la piété et à la force de caractère de la pauvre veuve : Dieu que nous adorons et qui pénètre les cœurs, vous a fourni des secours de consolation, dans la fermeté de votre âme et la résignation sainte volonté. » Cet officier offre ensuite à Mme Calas de lui en-oyer un extrait qu'il a fait de la procédure.

Grimm (Corr. litt., 25 mars) juge sévèrement cette coïncidence « factice... » L'arrêt des requêtes de l'Hôtel au Souverain a été rendu le même jour et à la même heure où Calas est mort dans les tourments du supplice, il y a trois ans. Rien ne m'a fait autant de peine que cette puérilité solennelle dans une cause de cette espèce ; elle m'a éprouvé une horreur dont il serait difficile de rendre compte : il me semble voir des enfants qui jouent avec des poignards et les instruments du bourreau. »

On trouvera le texte de ce jugement plus bas. (Pièces justif. xxxii.)

miers juges. Quand vint son tour d'opiner, il dit qu'il fallait « faire rendre compte au parlement de Toulou de sa conduite inique et barbare. » Il persista dans ses dires, quoique d'Aguesseau l'engageât à retirer ce qu'il y avait *de trop fort* dans son langage.

Enfin les Calas avaient obtenu justice, et une réparation bien tardive, mais aussi entière et aussi éclatante que les hommes peuvent la rendre, quand ils ont ôté ce que Dieu seul donne, la vie<sup>1</sup>.

On devine avec quels transports Voltaire reçut la grande nouvelle. Nous retrouvons, dans ce moment émouvant, le vieux philosophe attendant et bientôt dévorant ses lettres avec Donat, celui des enfants Calas qu'il aimait le plus. « Je vous avoue, écrit-il à Tronchin, que je n'ai de ma vie goûté une joie plus pure qu'en embrassant le petit Calas, lorsque nous reçûmes en même temps la nouvelle de la plus ample justice qu'on ait encore faite en France à l'innocence opprimée; ce grand exemple rognera pour longtemps les griffes affreuses du fanatisme et fera taire sa voix infernale (Recueil Cayrol I. 26 mars 1765). »

Il répond à son fidèle ami et collaborateur d'Argemontal :

Un petit Calas était avec moi quand je reçus votre lettre, celle de Mme Calas, et celle d'Élie, et tant d'autres : nous versions des larmes d'attendrissement, le petit Calas et moi. Mes vieux yeux en fournissaient autant que les siens; nous étouffions nos chers anges.

Après avoir cité ces touchantes paroles, M. l'abbé Salvan, dans le livre où il nous répond, ne trouve qu'un mot à dire sur Voltaire, et ce mot le voici : *Que pantin !* (page 125).

1. « Toute l'Europe en est instruite par ce courrier, » écrit Court de Gébelin à M. Polier de Bottens, professeur à Lausanne. Il en fait part en même temps à M. de Végobre, à Genève, à M. Bertrand, à Berne, à M. Ostervald, à Neuchâtel, etc. (Lettres inédites communiquées par M. le pasteur Ch. Frossard.)

Il se hâta d'écrire à Mme Calas :

« Vous devez, madame, être accablée de lettres et de visites. Genève est comme Paris, il bat des mains à vos juges. L'Europe attendrie bénit la justice qu'on vous a rendue. J'ai embrassé Donat Calas, en versant des larmes de joie. Vous avez suspendu tous les maux de M. de Brus et les miens. Nous n'avons senti que votre félicité au milieu de nos douleurs. » (*Extrait d'une lettre du 17 mars 1765; Collection de M. Fournier.*)

Comme il est facile de l'imaginer, la joie des protestants, qu'on avait si ridiculement accusés de mettre à mort leurs enfants en cas d'abjuration, fut immense. La condamnation de Calas avait été pour eux une insulte et un péril; sa réhabilitation leur rendit la sécurité. Le pasteur J.-P. Roux d'Uzès écrivit à Mme Calas, la félicitant chaleureusement d'avoir « triomphé des méchancetés de ceux qui voulaient, en perdant votre famille, inspirer que nous avons des préceptes que nous abhorrons. Or, madame, les obligations que vous a une partie de la nation (l'Eglise protestante de France) ne peuvent se reconnaître qu'en publiant votre fermeté et ces sublimes vertus qui embellissent votre âme. » (30 mars 1765. *Coll. de M. Fournier*). En même temps que ce pasteur, un prêtre, l'abbé Régnier, loue le courage de Mme Calas dans une lettre de félicitation enthousiaste. Il désire que cet exemple apprenne à la postérité, que la vertu trouve dans elle-même une force héroïque qui la distingue du vice et n'appartient qu'à elle seule. Il assure Mme Calas de sa vénération. (Du Château de St-Maurice, près d'Arpajon, 17 avril 1765. *Coll. Fournier.*)

Bientôt l'impatience reprit Voltaire; il restait à accomplir un genre de réparation beaucoup moins glorieux, mais aussi nécessaire. Nous prouverons que Mme Calas était ruinée. Les sommes considérables souscrites pour elle en France, en Suisse, en Angleterre, et auxquelles des souverains avaient contribué, avaient à



peine suffi aux frais énormes des cinq procès, aux voyages indispensables de tous les membres de la famille, et à faire vivre la pauvre veuve avec ses filles. Il ne fallait pas qu'il restât, des injustices qu'elles avaient subies, outre un deuil qui ne pouvait se réparer, une misère honteuse pour la nation, et qu'il était facile de prévenir. Voltaire s'alarma de ne pas voir aussitôt un don royal assurer l'existence de cette malheureuse victime des erreurs judiciaires. Il s'en plaignit à Damilaville avec sa verve ordinaire (27 mars 1765) :

« La reine a bu, dit-on, à sa santé, mais ne lui a point donné de quoi boire. »

Le mot est trivial; mais la plainte aurait été juste, si l'on eût tardé à y pourvoir.

Les nouveaux juges ne crurent pas avoir achevé leur tâche. Ils écrivirent en corps au vice-chancelier Maupeou<sup>1</sup> la lettre suivante<sup>2</sup> :

Monseigneur,

Nous avons rempli notre devoir comme juges en déchargeant la veuve de Jean Calas, son fils, Lavaysse, Jeanne Viguière, et la mémoire de Jean Calas, de l'accusation intentée contre eux; mais nous pensons que cette qualité nous impose encore l'obligation de vous prier de faire passer les vœux de la Compagnie jusqu'au pied du trône de Sa Majesté. Nous n'avons pu réparer qu'imparfaitement le malheur des accusés, et en rendant à Jean Calas son innocence, nous ne pouvons lui rendre la vie, ni un père à une famille nombreuse, ni un mari à une veuve désolée. Les suites de cet arrêt terrible, cassé par le Conseil sur la forme, détruit aujourd'hui sur le fond, ont causé des pertes irréparables à sa femme et à ses enfants; leur fortune est entièrement détruite. Contraints d'abandonner une province qui ne leur retracera que les plus cruelles idées, il leur reste peu d'espérance de ras-

1. René-Charles de Maupeou devint garde des sceaux et vice-chancelier en 1763, chancelier en 1768, et fut le père du fameux chancelier de Maupeou, qui lutta contre les parlements.

2. Communiquée par Mme Duvoisin née Nanette Calas à M. Charles Coquerel (*Annales protestantes*, p. 155 et suiv.)

sembler les faibles débris d'un patrimoine épuisé par une longue suite de revers. Nous vous supplions, Monseigneur, d'implorer pour eux les bontés du roi ; son cœur paternel sera touché sans doute de leur situation. Sa Majesté n'a pas de sujets plus dignes d'exciter sa pitié, puisqu'elle n'en a pas de plus malheureux.

Nous osons espérer, Monseigneur, que cette démarche sera favorablement accueillie, et nous en regarderons le succès comme témoignage le plus flatteur de la satisfaction de Sa Majesté.

Lors de l'examen de la procédure, tant des capitouls que du parlement de Toulouse, nous avons remarqué combien l'usage des *intendits*, dont on fait la lecture aux témoins, tandis que l'ordonnance ne le tolère que pour interroger les accusés, pourrait être dangereux et abusif. Nous avons l'honneur de vous adresser un mémoire particulier sur cet objet. Nous estimons qu'il peut mériter l'attention du Conseil et la vôtre ; nous ne pourrions que nous en rapporter avec confiance aux moyens que votre sagesse vous suggérera pour faire examiner cette question délicate, et qui peut intéresser l'ordre judiciaire, en matière criminelle.

RÉPONSE DU VICE-CHANCELIER.

Messieurs,

J'ai mis sous les yeux du roi la lettre que vous m'avez écrite en faveur de la dame et des enfants Calas ; il était digne de votre sagesse et de votre humanité, de faire porter au pied du trône des vœux empressés pour cette malheureuse famille. Vous êtes les plus sûres garanties de son innocence, et vous connaissez leur désastre. A ce double titre, votre voix ne pouvait que produire la plus vive impression sur le cœur de Sa Majesté, qui a vu avec plaisir l'expression de votre zèle et de vos généreux efforts pour ces infortunés. Jouissez de la satisfaction que doit vous donner le succès de votre demande. Le roi, dont l'âme est sensible à la justice et au malheur, a bien voulu jeter sur eux un regard favorable ; il a accordé à la veuve Calas une gratification de quinze mille francs, six mille francs à chacune de ses filles, trois mille francs à ses fils, trois mille francs à la servante <sup>1</sup>, et six mille francs pour les frais de voyage et de procédure.

Si la justice que vous avez rendue aux Calas n'excitait pas leur

1. Le testament de Viguière et d'autres pièces qui la concernent, dans la collection de M. Fournier, nous apprennent ce qu'elle fit de cette somme. Malgré des conseils pressants, elle la prêta tout entière à Louis, qui ne lui en rendit jamais rien. Elle légua sur cette mauvaise créance 1000 fr. à Rose, 500 à Mme Duvoisin, 500 à Pierre, 100 aux Petits-Pères de la place des Victoires, pour des messes destinées au repos de son âme, et le reste à Jean Floutard, matelot, son neveu.

reconnaissance, du moins les bienfaits que vous avez su leur procurer doivent opérer ce sentiment dans leur cœur d'une manière ineffaçable <sup>1</sup>.

D'après les Mémoires du temps (*Grimm*, 25 mars; *Beaumont*, t. II, p. 190), les maîtres des requêtes d~~ese~~ mandèrent également au roi d'interdire à Toulouse la procession du 17 mai. Nous n'avons pas retrouvé la trace officielle de cet acte, dont la hardiesse semblait intentionnelle et exagérée aux protestants du Languedoc. *Beaumont* écrivait à Paul Rabaut : « Vouloir, d'un seul coup, faire réformer ce dernier arrêt et abolir une pratique quoique abusive et condamnable, est le fantôme ch~~er~~ d'un peuple superstitieux, c'est, ce me semble, trop entreprendre et risquer de ne rien obtenir. Il me semble entendre les auteurs de l'apothéose de Marc-Antoine Calas s'écrier dans les cabinets des juges et aux oreilles de leurs pénitents : Tout est perdu pour la religion; on veut non-seulement nous ôter notre martyr pour le traîner sur une honteuse claie, mais on veut encore anéantir nos plus saintes cérémonies et rendre inutil~~es~~ les indulgences que le Saint-Père accorde à cette occasion. Je ne doute pas qu'on tienne ce langage à Toulouse <sup>2</sup>. »

Le vice-chancelier de Maupeou manda Mme Calas et ses compagnons d'infortune; il leur annonça lui-même les dons du roi. Dans une lettre encore inédite <sup>2</sup>, *Beaumont* rendit compte à Voltaire de leur entrevue avec M. de Maupeou à cette occasion; ils le consultèrent sur une question difficile sur laquelle personne n'osait se prononcer : leur serait-il permis de poursuivre à leur tour les juges de Toulouse? On leur avait dit que si le roi leur accordait une gratification c'était pour éviter qu'ils prissent à partie le parlement.

1. Collection Lajariette, de Nantes.

2. *Egl. du Désert*, t. 2, p. 337.

**qui les avait jetés dans l'indigence en même temps que dans le deuil :**

Après les premiers remerciemens, ils lui demandèrent si Sa Majesté leur défendait par là la prise à partie. M. le vice-chancelier leur répondit : Vous avés de bons conseils; consultez les **et faites ce qu'ils vous diront.** Cette réponse a cela de bon qu'elle **n'annonce nullement** que la prise à partie déplaît au roi, comme les Toulousains d'ici l'avaient répandu d'abord <sup>1</sup>. On doute néanmoins qu'elle puisse avoir lieu si les esprits des magistrats du Conseil ne sont un peu ranimés, *tantæ molis est* de punir parmi nous des prévaricateurs dont les charges excèdent quarante mille livres. Le dernier résultat de l'assemblée tenue chés M. d'Argental, le mercredi 3 avril, a été que pour être conséquent et raisonnable il fallait aussi prendre à partie les treize juges de la Tournelle, plus coupables encore que les capitouls, puisqu'ils étaient préposés par la loi pour les rectifier. Pour cela, il faut la permission du conseil et l'on craint fort que ces petits rois plébéiens ne paraissent assez puissans pour que, par une faiblesse honorée du nom de politique, on refuse de la permettre; on dit même qu'ils font à Toulouse la bonne contenance de vouloir faire imprimer la procédure, et qu'ils ont rendu arrêt portant défense d'afficher notre jugement d'absolution. Mais ce dernier fait n'est pas confirmé. On pense qu'il n'y a que des défenses verbales, qui après tout produiront le même effet.

Cette remarque est exacte, car les dispositions de l'arrêt d'après lesquelles l'écrou des Calas et leurs sentences devaient être biffés, et le jugement définitif transcrit en marge, n'ont jamais été exécutées. La sœur A.-J. Fraisse raconte aussi à Mlle Calas que le parlement s'assemble en secret et que ces Messieurs ont cherché quelque moyen de protester contre le jugement des Requêtes, mais n'en ont pas trouvé. Elle rapporte également qu'ils annoncent qu'ils publieront la procédure; mais elle ajoute : *Je réponds qu'ils s'en garderont bien* <sup>2</sup>.

Lavaysse père, à force de démarches, et en usant du

1. Il résulte cependant d'une note qui fait partie des papiers de Mme Calas, que « le chancelier Maupeou père a fait dire à la famille de ne point commencer aucune procédure à cet effet, parce qu'elle ne tendrait qu'à la ruine totale de la famille. »

2. Lettre XVIII.

crédit de ses nombreux amis, fit biffer l'écrou de son fils pendant les vacances du parlement et sans que la Chambre des vacations s'y opposât. Les Chambres assemblées en murmurèrent et prirent des mesures pour empêcher celle des vacations d'agir de même à l'avenir. Mme Calas donna en vain sa procuration à Mathieu Serres pour faire exécuter l'ordre des maîtres des Requêtes; il ne put y parvenir. Ce fondé de pouvoir. Mme Calas lui écrit<sup>1</sup> comme Élie de Beaumont, que le parlement avait eu l'idée de faire imprimer la procédure, *pour justifier l'arrêt*, que même une commission prise dans toutes les Chambres, avait été chargée d'examiner dans ce but les pièces, mais avait, après examen, renoncé à cette publication, sans assembler comme elle l'aurait dû, toutes les Chambres pour leur faire son rapport. Si ces faits mystérieux, qui sont rapportés de tant de côtés différents, sont réels, le parlement de Toulouse a virtuellement reconnu que la publication de la procédure lui ferait plus de tort que de bien. Elle justifierait non pas les juges, mais les condamnés. Cependant ce corps eut le crédit et l'obstination de maintenir sur ces registres sa sentence et les écrous des accusés, refusa d'y insérer l'arrêt souverain et de laisser afficher à Toulouse la sentence de réhabilitation, tout en désobéissance ouverte et flagrante aux ordres d'un tribunal supérieur.

Il existe encore à Toulouse des personnes assez aveugles pour louer cette conduite. M. Salvan s'écrie : « La conduite du second parlement de France, celui de Toulouse, fut en cette circonstance, pleine de grandeur et de noblesse... il menaça de faire imprimer la procédure. Il aurait dû le faire. » Ce dernier mot est juste mais, comme le parlement s'est contenté de menacer, ce fait répond suffisamment à tout ce qui précède.

1. Lettres des 22 novembre et 22 décembre 1765, collection de M. Fournier.

Voltaire, toujours habile, ne cessa de recommander aux Calas une grande prudence quant à la question de la prise à partie<sup>1</sup>. Une démarche inconsidérée pouvait, non pas compromettre la victoire obtenue, mais donner dans l'opinion quelque avantage au Parlement. Il ne fallait, en tous cas, tenter ce dernier coup que si l'on était sûr d'y réussir<sup>2</sup>.

Lavaysse père écrivit à Mme Calas pour la dissuader de prendre à partie, sinon les Capitouls, du moins le Parlement, et pour l'informer que Gaubert-Lavaysse en tout cas, ne la suivrait plus dans cette dernière démarche<sup>3</sup>.

Nous pensons qu'il avait raison, que c'était juger la situation avec une sage modération et un tact très-sûr. Il fallait que Jean Calas fût réhabilité, mais non vengé, que tout le monde eût horreur de la funeste prévention de ses juges et que nul ne fût tenté de les plaindre. Ils s'étaient trompés par excès de prévention, mais en se croyant justes : leur seul châtiment devait être de se voir convaincus d'injustice et de cruauté au tribunal de l'opinion universelle<sup>4</sup>.

Grimm s'indignait de ce que la poursuite contre les Capitouls et le parlement n'était pas faite aux frais de l'État et au nom du roi. Il prouvait clairement que Mme Calas ne pouvait s'en charger :

1. Lettres à Damilaville, 1<sup>er</sup> et 5 avril ; à d'Argental, 1<sup>er</sup> avril. Voir aussi une lettre de Voltaire à Debrus, lue à la Convention par le député Bézard (*Moniteur* du 23 pluviôse an II). Cette lettre a été insérée dans le *Recueil Cayrol*, n° 435. L'original se trouve dans la collection de M. Fournier.

2. D'autres les y poussèrent et La Beaumelle rédigea en ce sens un long Mémoire, destiné à la publicité, mais qui ne parut point. J'ai vu ce travail entre les mains de M. Angliviel, et un autre exemplaire moins complet, dans la collection de Mme de La Beaumelle. Ce Mémoire renferme des faits et des arguments qui ne sont pas sans valeur. Il en a existé une autre rédaction inachevée, sous le titre de « Lettre à M..., Maître des requêtes, un des juges de Calas. »

3. 16 avril 1765. Coll. de M. Fournier.

4. Ce sentiment a été exprimé avec énergie dans une épigramme po-

On permet bien à cette malheureuse famille de prendre ses juges à partie; mais je ne vois pour elle dans cette permission que des dépenses effrayantes, et peut être sa ruine entière. C'était au ministère public à poursuivre les assassins de Jean Calas : la cause de cet infortuné est celle de tous les citoyens. Si la vengeance publique se fait en faveur de ces hommes abominables, s'ils sont devenus inattaquables pour avoir acheté un office de conseiller au Parlement, comment une famille infortunée, épuisée de moyens et de courage, réussirait-elle à se procurer, à force de poursuite et de dépense, une satisfaction qu'il serait de la plus étroite obligation du gouvernement de lui faire donner de la manière la plus éclatante? Après l'assassinat juridique de ce père de famille, le domaine s'est emparé de son bien, comme confisqué au profit du roi et a dissipé le patrimoine de la veuve et de l'orphelin.... Les frais du procès seul, jusqu'au jour du jugement souverain, ont monté à plus de cinquante mille livres, fournies par la bienfaisance publique. Il en coûtera un argent immense à cette famille déplorable pour faire signifier ce jugement à tous les greffes; il lui en coûtera surtout pour le faire signifier au parlement de Toulouse; l'huissier qui se chargera de cette commission épineuse se fera payer à proportion des risques qu'il court<sup>1</sup>.

Le silence de ce corps, son opposition muette et obstinée, délibérée en assemblée secrète le 20 mars<sup>2</sup>, inspiraient à Voltaire de l'indignation et du mépris. Il exprime ce sentiment dans une lettre au marquis d'Argence de Dirac où il se réjouit, à juste titre, des adoucissements que la sympathie publique pour les Calas

pulaire où l'on trouvera une allusion à un incident du procès que nous avons rapporté, p. 154.

CONTRE MONSIEUR DE BONREPEAU

*Procureur général du roi à Toulouse.*

Faut-il donc que l'arrêt nouveau  
Te fasse tomber en syncope?  
Console-toi, cher Bonrepeau :  
Les Calas ont pour eux et Louis et l'Europe,  
Mais n'as-tu pas pour toi David et le bourreau?

1. Corr. litt., 25 mai.

2. Lettres de Voltaire à Debrus du 2 avril (Cayrol); à Argental, du 3; à Damilaville, du 5.

D'après le Mémoire inédit de La Beaumelle, on chargea le président de Niquet d'écrire au ministre pour sauver, s'il était possible, les briefs intendits et la procession du 17 mai.

apporta peu à peu au sort des protestants français encore persécutés.

S'il croit (le Parlement) avoir bien jugé les Calas, il doit publier la procédure pour tâcher de se justifier; s'il sent qu'il s'est trompé, il doit réparer son injustice ou du moins son erreur; il m'a fait ni l'un ni l'autre et voilà le cas où c'est le plus infâme des partis de n'en prendre aucun.

On me mande de Languedoc que cette fatale aventure a fait beaucoup de bien à ces pauvres huguenots et que, depuis ce temps là, on n'a envoyé personne aux ga'ères pour avoir prié Dieu en pleine campagne en vers français aussi mauvais que nos poèmes latins (12 oct. 1765).

Dès le début de l'affaire et pendant tout le temps qu'elle dura, Voltaire exprima souvent cette pensée, que la justice rendue aux Calas devait profiter à tous les protestants de France. C'est ainsi qu'il écrivait à Debrus :

Je vous dirai plus : cette affaire est très capable de faire obtenir à vous autres huguenots une tolérance que vous n'avez point eue depuis la révocation de l'édit de Nantes. Je sais bien que vous serez damnés dans l'autre monde; mais ce n'est pas une raison pour que vous soyez persécutés dans celui-ci<sup>1</sup>.

Plus d'une fois Voltaire reçut l'expression de la reconnaissance de ces huguenots, qui depuis trois cents ans étaient en butte à tant de rigueurs et à tant de calomnies. Aussi, en voyant le roi lui-même reconnaître par ses dons l'injustice de la sentence prononcée contre Calas et la fausseté de l'abominable accusation portée contre tous leurs coreligionnaires, la joie fut très-vive parmi eux. Depuis un siècle et plus, ils n'avaient reçu du pouvoir royal que des lois de sang et de persécution. Aussi Voltaire exagère à peine quand il dit de Louis XV en ce moment :

Tous les protestants sont prêts à mourir pour son service. Il faut bien peu de chose aux grands de ce monde pour inspirer l'amour ou la haine<sup>2</sup>.

1. Voir notre recueil, p. 150; et aussi pages 170, 202.

2. A Damilaville, 16 avril 1765.



Mais nous avons, de cette joie des Églises réformées, un témoin d'autant plus sûr qu'il est plus malveillant : le comte de Saint-Florentin. Persécuteur secret des Calas, il fut blessé du triomphe qu'ils remportèrent devant la justice du pays et plus encore peut-être du secours qu'ils reçurent du roi. Il écrivit à ce sujet une lettre caractéristique à son collègue dans le ministère, le contrôleur-général de Laverdy<sup>1</sup>. Nous y voyons que le malheureux Louis Calas, toujours cupide, n'avait pu se résigner à être seul excepté des munificences royales, auxquelles il n'avait aucun droit. Il n'avait souffert ni prison ni bannissement, et tout démontre qu'il avait contribué à attirer ce long déluge de maux sur sa famille, par son abjuration, intéressée ou non, par ses paroles inconsidérées au sujet de ses frères, par la faiblesse honteuse de ses premières réponses aux Pénitents blancs, quand ils lui proposèrent un service pour le repos de l'âme de Marc-Antoine, et par une foule d'inconséquences ou de lâchetés.

En voyant sa famille recevoir un don royal, il crut le moment favorable pour obtenir l'augmentation d'une pension de 100 livres que lui payait l'État<sup>2</sup>. Le comte de Saint-Florentin parlait avec irritation du partage qui avait été fait de la somme donnée par la cour et blâmait à cet égard la pauvre veuve, comme si la répartition des dons du roi entre les membres de sa famille eût dépendu d'elle. Un parent, un collègue de Saint-Florentin, M. de Maurepas, avertit la duchesse d'Anville, la protectrice zélée de Mme Calas. Cette dernière transmit aussitôt à M. de Maurepas la lettre du vice-chancelier qu'on a vue plus haut, et qui la justifiait en prouvant que cette répartition lui avait

1. Voir Pièces justificatives, XXXI.

2. Probablement pour remplacer celle que son père lui avait payée tant qu'il avait vécu.

été imposée et que son fils Louis n'y était point compris<sup>1</sup>.

C'est là en effet ce que demande pour lui le puissant solliciteur; selon Saint-Florentin, il faut que Louis Calas ait une part des 36 000 fr., à moins que le roi ne lui accorde un don particulier, plus considérable que ne le serait cette part. Il ne convient pas que le seul catholique de la famille soit excepté de la munificence royale<sup>2</sup>; les protestants en triompheraient. Déjà ils répandaient que le roi est décidé pour la tolérance. « L'indignation où nous sommes, dit Saint-Florentin, faute de roubles, en Languedoc et dans la plupart des provinces infectées de l'hérésie, ne le leur persuade déjà que trop. » Ainsi donc, à Versailles, en 1765, le principal ministre de Louis XV regrettait les dragonnades et l'écrivait de sa main, dans l'intimité d'une lettre de collègue à collègue.

Honneur et reconnaissance à Voltaire pour avoir lutté seul contre une si affreuse intolérance, si puissante encore, et pour l'avoir vaincue<sup>3</sup>. Honneur et reconnaissance à Jean Calas, dont le sang, héroïquement versé dans de lentes tortures, a lavé de la plus abominable calomnie, ses frères en la foi, et leur a assuré de nouveau le respect et les sympathies du monde.

1. Voir la lettre de M. de Maurepas. Pièces justificatives, XXXIII.

2. Il paraît que M. de Saint-Florentin réussit dans sa demande; il ne pouvait guère en être autrement. Grimm raconte dans sa Correspondance du 15 novembre 1765, que Louis vient d'obtenir une gratification de 1000 écus « pour l'empêcher de se repentir de sa conversion. » Il attribue cette faveur à l'influence du clergé. La sœur Fraisse en parle aussi à Mlle Calas dans sa lettre XX.

3. Le dernier acte de la pièce a fini heureusement, écrit-il à Cideville; c'est, à mon gré, le plus beau cinquième acte qui soit au théâtre.



## CHAPITRE XII.

### DERNIERS ÉVÉNEMENTS.

**Pauvreté de Mme Calas. — L'estampe. — Nouvelle calomnie et nouvelle réponse de Viguière. — Mme Calas à Ferney. — Obsèques de Voltaire au Panthéon. — Louis et ses sœurs devant la Convention. — Fin de Mme Calas, de ses fils, de Lavaysse et de David.**

La vérité sort du nuage de la vraisemblance, mais elle en sort trop tard; le sang de l'innocent demande vengeance contre la prévention de son juge, et le magistrat est réduit à pleurer toute sa vie un malheur que son repentir ne peut réparer.

D'AGUESSEAU.

(16<sup>e</sup> mercuriale.)

On lit dans un des journaux du temps que M. de Bacquencourt, le rapporteur du procès, se rendit, peu de jours après la sentence, chez Mme Calas, et lui remit une somme considérable en or. Comme elle demandait à qui elle en avait l'obligation :

« Je suis chargé, madame, lui a-t-il répondu, de vous demander comme une grâce de ne point prendre la peine de vous en informer. »

Ce don, offert avec tant de respect et de tact, n'était nullement superflu; il faudrait n'avoir aucune idée de la justice d'alors pour croire que les 36 000 francs du roi n'étaient pas épuisés, malgré tout ce que Voltaire

avait payé aux avocats, par cinq procès successifs et trois années de voyages ou de sollicitations de toute une famille.

La position des Calas était en effet déplorable. Voici ce qu'il était advenu de leur très-modeste fortune, déjà fort diminuée, si ce n'est compromise par l'état de gêne où se trouvait, à cette époque, le commerce dans le midi de la France <sup>1</sup>.

Depuis le 13 octobre 1761 jusqu'au supplice de Calas, le 9 mars de l'année suivante, le mobilier, les marchandises, tout ce que contenait la maison, fut laissé, sans inventaire ni scellés, sous la garde de neuf et bientôt de vingt soldats, c'est-à-dire à peu près au pillage <sup>2</sup>.

Mais à peine le martyr avait expiré, on se précipita de tous côtés sur ce qu'il laissait, comme sur une proie qu'on pouvait librement se disputer. Il y eut conflit entre les autorités et les créanciers. « Après la mort de Calas, la justice et les créanciers cherchèrent à partager les dépouilles. Il est certain que beaucoup de valeurs furent enlevées. » Qui parle ainsi? le dernier défenseur des juges de Calas, l'abbé Salvan (p. 129). Le jour même de l'exécution, pour assurer la confiscation des deux tiers prononcée dans l'arrêt de mort, outre

1. Les détails qui suivent sont tirés non-seulement des pièces qui se trouvent aux Archives du parlement à Toulouse, de la correspondance de l'intendant du Languedoc avec le ministre, avec son subdélégué à Toulouse et avec le directeur de la régie (Archives de Montpellier), et du rapport lu par le député Bézard à la Convention, mais surtout d'un dossier très-considérable qui fait partie de la collection de M. Fournier.

2. « M<sup>me</sup> Calas, écrivait-on de Montauban, m'a dit que le sieur David, capitoul, qui arrêta Calas et fit la première procédure, a enlevé beaucoup d'effets qui ne sont point sur l'inventaire, notamment des carnets particuliers contenant les comptes de plusieurs débiteurs; lesquels débiteurs en sont sans doute instruits, puisqu'ils nient la dette. De ce nombre, est un tapissier de M. l'archevêque, pour 900 fr. On a encore des reconnaissances de main-privée, faites par feu M. Calas à sa femme pour 4000 fr., avec les lettres de naturalisation anglaise de feu son père. » (Voir lettres de Voltaire. Notre recueil. Appendice.)

D'après Court de Gébelin, dès le lendemain de l'arrestation, Louis Calas fit des démarches pour obtenir que la continuation du commerce de son père lui fut légalement confiée. Il n'y réussit pas.

l'amende et les dépenses, le *receveur général des domaines et bois* à Toulouse, G. de Mellié, requit la pose des scellés sur les effets et marchandises du supplicié. En même temps, les fermiers de la régie demandèrent, par une requête en forme, d'être autorisés à saisir ces biens. Une déclaration de 1729 les y autorisait, seulement à l'égard des *religionnaires fugitifs*. Ce n'était pas le cas, et ils n'obtinrent point la saisie qu'ils demandaient. D'un autre côté, le 19 mars, les créanciers de Calas, c'est-à-dire les négociants avec lesquels il était en affaires, réclamèrent leurs droits. Aussitôt les capitouls intervinrent pour exiger le paiement des frais de garde, à vingt hommes par jour, pendant cinq mois. Enfin Louis intervint de son côté, mais après la mort de son père, « suppliant humblement ses juges de lui accorder le privilège d'être payé avant tous autres créanciers. » Son père lui avait remis récemment un billet de 100 fr. sur un de ses débiteurs ; mais ce dernier, craignant d'avoir à payer deux fois, refusa de le faire avant la répartition de l'actif entre les créanciers. Louis ne manqua pas de redire que sa pension lui avait été allouée parce que feu son père « refusait de l'entretenir dans sa maison à cause de la religion catholique professée par le suppliant, » ce qui eût été odieusement hors de propos, quand même ce n'eût été, en outre, matériellement faux (voy. plus haut, p. 57-62).

Qu'était cependant cette fortune sur laquelle tant de prétentions se faisaient jour ? Voici ce qu'en dit à l'intendant Saint-Priest, le 28 avril 1762, le subdélégué Amblard, celui même qui lui avait écrit d'abord que Calas était *fort riche*, et qui s'était indigné, en conséquence, du peu que le père donnait à Louis (voir plus haut p. 89).

Les biens du S<sup>r</sup> Calas ne consistent qu'en marchandises et en meubles.... Le négociant même qui a procédé à l'inventaire m'a assuré que leur valeur n'était que de 80 000 livres qui se trou-

vaient absorbées par les frais de justice, les dettes et par la dot de la femme. Ce négociant m'a même ajouté que les créanciers avaient formé opposition au scellé mis à la requête du fermier du domaine, afin d'éviter, s'ils le peuvent, que les biens soient vendus d'autorité de justice, ce qui augmenterait d'autant plus les frais et rendrait leur perte plus considérable ; mais leurs vues sont, si l'opposition est reçue, de les faire vendre amiablement et d'en prendre chacun au prorata de leurs créances.

Il est certain que Mme Calas se trouva dans la position la plus difficile, malgré ce qu'elle recouvra des débris de son aisance passée. Dès qu'elle eut quelques ressources, elle s'occupa avec activité, comme le montrent ses lettres à Cazeing, de payer tous ses créanciers et entre autres, de rembourser à ce dernier, à son neveu et aux sieurs Martignac et Borel, les avances qu'ils lui avaient faites et les secours d'amis, dont ses filles avaient subsisté, pendant les cinq mois d'emprisonnement de leurs parents <sup>1</sup>.

Depuis longtemps les amis de Mme Calas à Paris avaient été forcés de songer à lui créer des ressources et s'étaient arrêtés à un plan qui, sans porter aucune atteinte à la dignité de la veuve et de sa famille, fournissait un prétexte très-convenable à des souscriptions devenues nécessaires. Il s'agissait de l'estampe que nous avons reproduite en tête de ce volume ; publiée par souscription, elle eut un grand succès d'abord ; mais les ennemis de Calas, malgré le privilège du roi qui en autorisait la vente, la firent interdire pendant huit mois <sup>2</sup>.

Deux ans plus tard, en 1767, l'innocence des Calas fut mise de nouveau en question.

On débite en Languedoc (écrit encore Voltaire à Elie de Beaumont, le 26 mars 1767) que Jeanne Viguière est morte à Paris où elle est en pleine santé <sup>3</sup>, qu'avant de mourir elle a déclaré

1. Voir la note 27, à la fin du volume.

2. On trouvera les détails de cette affaire étrange dans la note 28.

3. Ceci est exagéré ; elle avait fait une chute et s'était cassé la jambe.

par devant notaire qu'elle avait été une sacrilège toute sa vie, qu'elle avait feint pendant quarante ans d'être catholique pour être l'espion des huguenots, qu'elle avait aidé son maître et sa maîtresse à pendre leur fils aîné, que les protestants de ce pays avaient en effet un bourreau secret, élu à la pluralité des voix, lequel venait aider les pères et mères à tuer leurs enfants quand ils voulaient aller à la messe, et que cette charge était la première dignité de la communion protestante.

Mais cette calomnie absurde tourna contre ceux qui se l'étaient permise et qui l'avaient répandue jusque dans Paris, où Fréron est accusé<sup>1</sup> de l'avoir propagée. Jeanne fit une *Déclaration juridique* devant des témoins honorables et devant son confesseur, qui consentit à sanctionner cet acte par sa présence. Par ce nouveau témoignage, elle persévéra dans toutes ses assertions, et nia tout ce qu'elle avait toujours nié<sup>2</sup>. Viguière vécut jusqu'en 1780, et son confesseur délivra après sa mort à Mme Calas l'acte suivant :

Je soussigné, confesseur approuvé par le très-illustre seigneur Monseigneur de Beaumont, archevêque de Paris, certifie que, depuis seize à dix-sept ans, j'ai entendu en confession Jeanne Viguière, ancienne domestique de Mme Calas de Toulouse, décédée le 7 décembre 1780 munie des sacrements de l'Église, âgée d'environ quatre-vingt dix ans, m'ayant donné des preuves qu'elle avait toute sa raison, chaque fois que j'allais la voir dans le courant de sa maladie; et qu'elle a toujours persisté dans les mêmes sentiments dont elle a fait la déclaration le 3 mars 1767 au sieur Jean François Hugues, conseiller du Roy, commissaire au Châtelet de Paris, touchant les bruits calomnieux qui se sont répandus sur son compte. En foy de quoy j'ai délivré le présent certificat à la susdite dame Calas, pour lui servir ce que de raison. Fait à Paris ce quinzième décembre 1780.

GARILLAUD IRÉNÉE

Augustin près la place des Victoires.

(Collection de M. Fournier.)

ce qui donna lieu au bruit de sa mort, effrontément exploité aussitôt contre ses maîtres.

1. Par Condorcet, note de la page 252, du tome II des *Œuvres de Voltaire*, éd. de Kehl.

2. Cette *Déclaration*, annotée par Voltaire, se trouve dans presque



Cette inébranlable persistance n'étonnera pas nos lecteurs, mais elle devrait surprendre profondément ceux qui s'obstinent encore à mettre les Calas au rang des fanatiques et des assassins. Le fanatisme est un fait moral bien connu; il s'est révélé au monde sous toutes les formes; l'histoire en a rendu compte, et plus d'une fois les philosophes, les moralistes l'ont discuté, étudié, analysé. Où vit-on jamais quatre ou cinq énergumènes, après avoir commis le plus affreux des meurtres par fanatisme, s'en guérir tout à coup, tous à la fois, si complètement que dès ce moment on n'en trouve plus trace dans la vie d'un seul d'entre eux? Le fanatisme ne se corrige guère, ou, s'il se repent, c'est à sa manière, très-caractéristique et très-distincte de tout autre repentir. Il est contraire à la nature humaine qu'une bande d'assassins par zèle religieux redeviennent tout à coup des gens aussi calmes, aussi débonnaires que tous les autres, sans que leur vie ou leur mort les trahisse. Peut-être cela est-il possible pour des criminels politiques, après que les hommes, les institutions, les influences qui les avaient exaltés ont complètement disparu. Mais comme la mort, l'éternité, Dieu, sont toujours devant nous, le crime commandé par un barbare fanatique laisse toujours après lui ou le remords, ou l'inquiétude, ou une sauvage et sombre satisfaction, et quelquefois ces divers sentiments tour à tour. Cela est surtout vrai quand il s'agit d'un acte qui devait révolter un des instincts les plus naturels et les plus vivaces de l'âme, tel que l'amour maternel. En Pierre Calas, en Lavaysse, c'est à peine si l'on trouve les indices de la piété même la plus vulgaire; tandis que, chez les plus croyants d'entre ]

toutes les éditions de ses œuvres à la suite des pièces qui concernent les Calas. Voir Bibliographie, n° 47. L'original, sur papier timbré, daté du 29 mars 1767, rédigé et signé par J.-F. Hugues, commissaire Chatelet, est dans la collection de M. Fournier.

accusés, la foi est ferme et paisible, sans aucune apparence d'exaltation.

Leurs divers caractères ne cessent de se montrer dans la suite de leur vie, avec le degré d'énergie qui appartient à chacun. Il suffira ici de quelques traits rapides. Mais leur défense et leur histoire seraient également incomplètes si nous ne montrions ce qu'ils furent jusqu'à la mort.

Mme Calas continua à vivre avec ses filles à Paris, où elle avait trouvé accueil et respect, loin des lieux, affreux pour elle, qu'avait ensanglantés le martyre de celui dont elle porta le deuil tant qu'elle vécut. Lavaysse, qui avait trouvé de l'emploi dans une maison de commerce ou de banque, remplaça auprès d'elle, pendant les premières années, ses fils absents.

Le 22 novembre 1763, elle écrivait à Cazeing aîné ces lignes où se retrouve toute sa tendresse pour celui de ses enfants dont on l'accusait d'avoir souhaité la mort :

J'ay des bonnes nouvelles de mes fils de Genève ; ils se porte bien et travaille beaucoup, il n'a pas de même de Louis ; sa santé est misérable et il n'a point trouvé encore à se placer. Les fonds lui manquent et son état est triste ; je ne puis vous cacher que j'en suis touchée.

Ses fils de Genève étaient Donat, qui n'avait pas quitté cette ville, et Pierre, qui y était retourné pour continuer les affaires de commerce qu'il y avait commencées. Voltaire s'inquiéta d'abord de le voir sortir de France. Il craignit que le gouvernement français ne s'offensât de cet exil volontaire, qui était encore interdit aux protestants ; mais personne n'en prit occasion ou prétexte pour attaquer les Calas, et dès le 1<sup>er</sup> juin Voltaire lui-même écrivait à M. Ribotte :

Les deux frères Calas commencent à faire une petite fortune dans ce pays<sup>1</sup>.

1. Voir sur leurs affaires, la note 29.

L'année suivante, il recommanda à Colini Pierre Calas que ses affaires appelaient en Allemagne. Le 28 septembre 1770, les deux frères furent reçus bourgeois de Genève, sans frais, sur la recommandation du duc de Choiseul, transmise au *Petit Conseil* par M. Necker. Deux ans après (en juillet 1772), Pierre épousa Marthe Martin<sup>1</sup>.

En 1770 Mme Calas vit Voltaire pour la première fois. Elle fit avec Gaubert Lavaysse le voyage de Ferney, attirée sans doute par le désir, de revoir ses deux fils établis à Genève, Donat surtout dont elle avait été séparée avant tous ses malheurs, il y avait plus de neuf ans. L'entrevue de Voltaire et de Mme Calas fut, des deux parts, pleine de joie et d'émotion. Il en rendit compte à d'Alembert, en quelques mots :

Cette bonne et vertueuse mère me vint voir ces jours passés ; je pleurai comme un enfant<sup>2</sup>.

Elle le revit à Paris en 1778, lorsqu'il vint y mourir au milieu d'un dernier triomphe, plus bruyant, mais moins réel que ceux dont les Calas lui avaient donné l'occasion.

« Quand il revint à Paris en 1778, un jour que le public l'entourait sur le pont Royal, on demanda à une femme du peuple qui était cet homme qui traînait la foule après lui : « Ne savez-vous pas, dit-elle, que c'est le sauveur des Calas ? » « Il s'agit de cette réponse, et au milieu de toutes les marques d'admiration qui lui furent prodiguées, ce fut ce qui le toucha le plus. »

D'un autre côté, l'acteur Fleury raconte dans ses Mémoires qu'après la fameuse représentation d'*Irène*, 30 mars 1773, où le buste de Voltaire avait été couronné en sa présence au milieu d'applaudissements

1. Voir, sur sa postérité, la note 30.

2. On trouvera à la fin du volume deux lettres que Voltaire reçut M<sup>me</sup> Calas et de Lavaysse, après leur retour à Paris. Ces lettres proviennent de la collection Lajariette de Nantes. Le fragment de réponse nous y avons joint s'est trouvé dans la collection de M. Fournier.

**f**rénétiques, la voiture du poète fut accompagnée par la foule, et un rassemblement composé d'ouvriers l'attendit au coin de la rue du Bac pour le féliciter. Fleury remarque qu'à cette époque il y avait, même chez le peuple, une tendance à dénigrer le clergé. « Ces braves gens, dit-il, allaient crier, je crois, vive le Philosophe ! quand, m'étant trouvé au milieu d'eux, je leur dis : « Écoutez donc ce qu'ils crient ? Il y a bien autre chose de mieux à dire : et Calas ! et la famille Sirven ! » Ce mot suffit ; ils partent, se ruent sur la voiture, jettent en l'air leurs bonnets et s'écrient, au milieu des autres cris : « Vive le défenseur de Calas ! Vive le défenseur de Sirven ! » Voltaire distingua cet hommage, et ce fut alors que se retournant vers le public, il dit : « Vous voulez donc m'étouffer sous des roses ! » En effet, il avait eu son apothéose avant sa mort, et sa mort devait suivre de bien près. Le 30 mai suivant, il expira âgé de quatre-vingt-quatre ans. »

Trois ans après la mort de Voltaire<sup>1</sup>, on répandit le bruit qu'il avait reconnu, vers la fin de sa vie, la culpabilité de Jean Calas. « Quatre personnes, disait-on, s'étaient glissées derrière une tapisserie, d'où elles avaient entendu ce monstre prononcer à son fils sa sentence de mort. » On ajoutait que « M. de Voltaire avait les plus vifs regrets de s'être si fort intéressé pour cette famille de scélérats, auxquels il fit en conséquence fermer sa porte à Paris. » Fable inventée après coup, mensonges ineptes encore plus qu'odieux. Quant à ces quatre témoins venus exprès chez Calas pour l'entendre annoncer le supplice de son fils, comment ne le dénoncèrent-ils pas, aimant mieux être excommuniés que de parler ? Il n'y a pas la moindre trace de cette histoire dans le quintuple examen de l'affaire fait et refait successivement par les Capitouls, le parle-

1. Nous empruntons ce fait et les preuves qui l'appuient à l'*Introduction des Lettres inédites de Voltaire*, publiées par nous.

ment, le Conseil privé, le Grand Conseil et les maîtres des requêtes.

M. d'Hornoy, fils du premier lit de Mme de Florian, nièce de Voltaire, Wagnière, son secrétaire, Mme Saint-Julien qui ne quitta pas le vieillard pendant ses derniers jours<sup>1</sup>, attestèrent l'absolue fausseté des racontars qu'on propageait. Voltaire est mort parfaitement convaincu de l'innocence des Calas et de l'entière justice de leur réhabilitation. Wagnière, qui fut renvoyé de Ferney un mois avant la mort de son maître, déclara avoir été « témoin de la manière attendrissante dont il reçut à Paris la veuve et ses filles. » Mais il parle d'une visite faite par elles à leur bienfaiteur dès son arrivée à Paris et nous pouvons affirmer<sup>2</sup> que peu de moments avant sa fin, il accueillit encore Mme Calas et ses enfants venus pour lui apporter une dernière fois le tribut de leur vive reconnaissance.

1. On peut voir ces divers témoignages dans les *Mémoires sur Voltaire*, par Longchamp et Wagnière, ses secrétaires, publiés en 1826 (par MM. L. P. Decroix et Beuchot), 2 vol. in-8, t. I, p. 57 et suiv.

2. La preuve en est la lettre suivante de M. d'Hornoy à M. Beuchot. Je dois cette pièce à la gracieuse obligeance de M. Louis Barbier, bibliothécaire du Louvre.

« Paris, 2 avril 1826.

« Je n'ai pas eu l'honneur de vous répondre sur-le-champ, monsieur, parce que je voulais revoir la lettre que vous me citez; le volume est revenu, et je puis vous certifier que tout ce que dit Wagnière, de la page 57 à la page 59, est de la plus exacte vérité. Si j'ai eu des soupçons sur l'auteur de cet absurde mensonge, je me suis gré de ne pas les avoir exprimés dans le temps, et encore plus de les avoir oubliés depuis quarante-cinq années. Ce dont j'ai parfaitement conservé la mémoire, c'est que M. de Voltaire n'avait puisé son opinion sur la malheureuse famille des Calas que sur l'examen le plus approfondi et d'après les recherches les plus exactes; que depuis le moment où son opinion a été fixée jusqu'à sa mort, elle n'a pas varié un instant. J'ai été témoin de la manière dont il a reçu les restes de cette malheureuse famille peu de moments avant son décès. Une histoire aussi ridicule et aussi absurde que celle que réfute Wagnière tombe dans la classe de celles auxquelles depuis feu Haroun-al-Raschid, toute célébrité est exposée. La célébrité est livrée encore plus aux faiseurs de contes qu'aux récits des historiens.

« Je suis aise, monsieur, que cette occasion me procure l'honneur de vous assurer de la considération distinguée avec laquelle je suis,

« Votre très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur,

« D'HORNOY. »

Ils eurent encore à lui rendre après sa mort un dernier hommage. On sait que, la nuit même où il mourut, son neveu, l'abbé Mignot, emporta le corps à son abbaye de Sellières où il le fit inhumer et où ses restes demeurèrent jusqu'à la Révolution. En 1791 l'abbaye et l'église furent détruites; Paris se montra jaloux de la gloire que s'acquit la petite ville de Romilly en donnant un asile à ces cendres glorieuses. L'enthousiasme était au comble pour celui qu'on proclamait le premier auteur de la Révolution. Des funérailles éclatantes lui furent votées par l'Assemblée et le corps fut porté de Romilly aux ruines de la Bastille où Voltaire avait été détenu pendant sa jeunesse, puis le lendemain (12 juillet), de la Bastille au Panthéon<sup>1</sup>. Nous n'avons pas à décrire ici cette pompe à la fois officielle et populaire. Disons seulement que le magnifique sarcophage portait cette inscription : *Il vengea Calas, la Barre, Sirven et Montbailly*; et qu'après s'être rendu par les boulevards, de la Bastille à la place Louis XV, l'immense cortège vint stationner sur le quai Voltaire, devant la maison où il mourut, celle du ci-devant marquis de Villette. Là, de jeunes citoyennes en robes blanches attendaient sur un amphithéâtre pour chanter une ode de Chénier mise en musique par Gossec. Mme de Villette, que Voltaire avait recueillie chez lui et mariée, et qu'il aimait à appeler *belle et bonne*, couronna sa statue; puis elle prit rang dans le cortège auprès de Mme Calas et de ses enfants, qui représentaient avec elle les membres de la famille de leur commun bienfaiteur; cette idée fut peut-être ce qu'il y eut de plus simple et de plus touchant

1. On sait que ses os n'y sont plus. Au temps de la Terreur blanche quelques énergumènes violèrent de nuit sa tombe et celle de Rousseau, pour disperser leurs cendres, et montrèrent ainsi que le fanatisme dévot ne respecte pas plus les morts que le fanatisme jacobin ne les avait respectés à Saint-Denis.

dans tout l'étalage de l'enthousiasme et de la sensibilité publics. La part de Mme Calas dans cette fête, où elle ne devait pas refuser de paraître, fut donc à la fois modeste et digne<sup>1</sup>.

Le soir de ce jour de deuil, le Théâtre-Français de la rue de Richelieu donna *Calas ou l'École des Juges*, par Marie-Joseph Chénier. Au Théâtre de la Nation (Odéon), on joua *Mahomet* et la *Bienfaisance de Voltaire*, autre pièce dont les Calas étaient après lui les héros<sup>2</sup>.

Mme Calas survécut quelques mois à cette cérémonie. Elle mourut à Paris, rue Poissonnière, n° 3, le 29 avril 1792<sup>3</sup>.

Ses deux fils établis à Genève l'avaient précédée. Donat mourut d'hydropisie, sans laisser de postérité, le 10 avril 1776. Pierre décéda le 20 septembre 1790. Les inventaires de leurs biens, qui existent encore à Genève<sup>4</sup>, indiquent peu d'aisance à l'époque où mourut Donat; mais quatorze ans après, à la mort de Pierre, sa position de fortune était meilleure<sup>5</sup>.

A deux reprises, les Assemblées nationales s'occupèrent des derniers membres de la famille Calas.

Ce fut d'abord, le 18 juin 1792, l'Assemblée législative, à laquelle Louis Calas, incorrigible dans sa cupidité, vint demander de l'argent. Il fut admis à la barre. Un

1. *Moniteur* du 13 juillet et du 30 juin précédent.

2. Voir sur les nombreuses pièces de théâtre dont les malheurs des Calas ont fourni le sujet, notre chapitre xv : *Histoire de l'opinion* et la *Bibliographie*, 5<sup>e</sup> partie.

3. En janvier 1763 elle habitait le quai des Orfèvres; elle s'était ensuite établie aussi près que possible de sa fille Mme Duvoisin et dans la même rue.

Voir l'acte de ses funérailles. Cet acte (trouvé par M. Read à l'Hôtel de Ville) est un exemple assez curieux de la manière dont avaient lieu à cette époque les inhumations de protestants à Paris.

4. *Registre des inventaires après décès* (Hôtel-de-Ville de Genève).

5. D'après le registre de l'état civil de Genève, Donat aurait eu 37 ans et Pierre 58 quand ils moururent. Ce sont là des chiffres approximatifs et tous deux exagérés. La naissance de Pierre se trouverait antérieure à celle de son frère aîné, dont nous avons la date authentique.

Voir sur la descendance de P. Calas, la note 30.

*défenseur officieux*, que l'on ne nomme pas, prit la parole, à sa place, et le désigna comme le dernier rejeton de la famille.

Réduit par le désespoir à quitter sa patrie, l'Angleterre lui a donné un asile depuis vingt-cinq ans<sup>1</sup> : mais ce qui lui reste de sa malheureuse mère, loin de suffire au payement des engagements de son père, considérablement accrus par les intérêts, ne suffit même pas à sa subsistance et à celle de sa famille.

Le président (M. Français, de Nantes) témoigna au pétitionnaire la sensibilité de l'Assemblée envers une des victimes des intrigues sacerdotales et du despotisme parlementaire.

La demande fut renvoyée au Comité des secours publics et n'eut pas de suites.

A la Convention ce ne fut aucun des Calas qui vint appeler sur lui l'attention publique. Le 25 brumaire an II, on venait de réhabiliter la mémoire du chevalier de La Barre, autre victime dont Voltaire avait généreusement entrepris la défense. On décida en même temps qu'une colonne serait érigée en l'honneur de Calas sur le lieu de son supplice. Barrère dit à la tribune :

Vous devez réhabiliter aussi la mémoire de Calas, dont un rejeton se fait remarquer aux Jacobins par la pureté de son patriotisme.

On sait déjà que ce rejeton est encore Louis.

Il vint à la barre avec ses deux sœurs (l'une n'était point mariée et l'autre déjà veuve) exprimer à la Convention leur reconnaissance. La lettre qu'ils firent déposer sur le bureau, écrite dans le style du temps, exprime les sentiments que devait leur inspirer l'hommage rendu à leur père.

LES ENFANTS DE L'INFORTUNÉ CALAS AU CITOYEN PRÉSIDENT  
DE LA CONVENTION NATIONALE.

Citoyen président,

Les enfans de l'infortuné Calas, vivement pénétrés de la justice que la Convention nationale vient de rendre à la mémoire de

1. Il y avait exercé la profession de *chirurgien*, à Londres, dans Denmark Street, paroisse de Saint-Gilles. — Là encore il avait exploité



leur malheureux père, viennent jeter à ses pieds le tribut de leur immortelle gratitude, et te prier, citoyen président, de vouloir être leur organe pour en faire passer l'expression à l'auguste assemblée. Nos âmes altérées par le malheur n'ont que la faculté de sentir ce bienfait, sans pouvoir dépeindre l'étendue de leur reconnaissance. Ah ! daigne lire dans la nature tous les sentiments de l'amour filial, et tu seras le fidèle interprète de nos cœurs.

Il était réservé à des législateurs éclairés par la philosophie d'anéantir le fanatisme et d'élever un monument pour rétablir les droits de la nature si cruellement outragée. Pères de la patrie, restaurateurs des opprimés, agréez les vœux de vos enfans et particulièrement l'hommage d'une famille qui a reçu spécialement vos bienfaits.

Salut et fraternité.

Louis CALAS.

Anne-Rose CALAS.

Anne CALAS, veuve DUVOISIN.

La Convention ordonna la mention honorable et l'insertion au *Bulletin* de cette lettre, qui donna lieu, dit-on dans le procès-verbal de la séance du 29 brumaire, à une discussion digne des représentants d'un grand peuple.

Enfin, le 23 pluviôse, un long et solennel discours fut prononcé par le citoyen Bézard, faisant connaître, à l'aide de documents fournis par les trois derniers membres de la famille Calas, des faits ignorés jusqu'alors et que nous avons relatés plus haut. Il ne demanda rien pour Louis et ses sœurs, mais il conclut à ce que la nation prît à sa charge les dettes de Jean Calas, et achevât, en désintéressant tous ses créanciers, la réhabilitation de cette noble mémoire, hommage bien plus digne de lui que tout autre, double réparation due à l'intègre négociant ruiné par ses juges, et à ceux qui s'étaient confiés en lui<sup>1</sup>.

A dater de ce moment, nous perdons la trace de Louis Calas. Mais il nous reste à raconter l'histoire de l'une de ses sœurs, que nous avons à peine indiquée

les malheurs de sa famille et le nom de Voltaire, comme le prouve une brochure qu'il fit imprimer en 1772 à Londres (Voir *Bibliogr.* n° 97), et qui eut une seconde édition en 1789.

1. « La quittance générale de ses créanciers est une inscription qui

jusqu'ici et où, après tant de récits pénibles ou tragiques, nous trouverons des souvenirs plus doux.

Nous devons rendre compte d'abord, en quelques mots rapides, de ce que devinrent deux des acteurs les plus importants de ce long drame, Gaubert Lavaysse et David de Beaudrigue.

Le premier, nous écrit une de ses petites-nièces, accomplit le projet qu'il avait formé avant ses malheurs. Il se voua au commerce ; plus tard il résida quelque temps en Angleterre, pour étendre ses entreprises. Étant devenu correspondant de la Compagnie des Indes à Lorient, il vécut jusqu'en 1786, époque de sa mort, jouissant d'une considération due à sa probité, à l'aménité de son caractère, au bien que lui permettait de faire sa grande fortune. Il ne fut jamais marié.

La fin de David de Beaudrigue offre un contraste terrible avec celle de cet homme de bien qui avait été une de ses victimes. A mesure que la lumière se fit dans cette affaire si mal jugée, après la mort admirable de Calas, après la publicité immense donnée par Voltaire à ses malheurs et à son innocence, David se vit l'objet du blâme et de la réprobation à peu près universels<sup>1</sup>.

Nous avons vu qu'il fut destitué le 25 février 1765.

Voici ce qu'on lit à son sujet, quelques mois après, dans un journal du temps (les *Affiches de Province*, n° 49, du 9 octobre 1765)<sup>2</sup> :

On écrit de Toulouse que le sieur *David*, Capitoul, qui, dans la malheureuse affaire des Calas, s'est conduit avec la plus coupable passion, est lui-même actuellement dans un fort déplorable état. Sa destitution, le jugement des requêtes de l'Hôtel, et la crainte d'une prise à partie lui ont totalement dérangé la tête.

manquerait à la colonne, » dit Bézard en finissant. Voici les termes du décret :

Les créanciers légitimes de Jean Calas, colloqués dans l'arrêt de distribution du ci-devant Parlement de Toulouse du 3 septembre 1763, seront payés par le trésor public des sommes qui leur restent dues.

1. Voir à la fin du vol. la note 31.

2. Recueil de Mme de la Beaumelle, I, 304.

En proie aux idées les plus sinistres, il ne voit que gibets et que bourreaux prêts à lui faire subir la juste peine du talion. On l'a fait conduire à Saint-Papoul <sup>1</sup> auprès de sa femme qu'il avait chassée depuis longtemps de sa maison. A peine y est-il arrivé, qu'il s'est échappé pour courir les champs. Repris et ramené dans sa maison, il s'est précipité d'une fenêtre dans la rue, sans se tuer. Depuis ce trait de frénésie, on le garde à vue et quand le trouble et le désespoir viennent l'agiter, quatre hommes ont de la peine à le contenir <sup>2</sup>.

D'après un autre document, il se jeta une seconde fois du haut de la maison et se tua. On ajoute même qu'il prononça le nom de Calas en mourant.

Cette hideuse fin est à la fois un châtiment et, en quelque mesure, une réhabilitation morale, si, comme nous voulons le croire, ses remords lui servirent de bourreau<sup>3</sup>.

1. C'était sa ville natale.

2. Voir aussi Grimm. (Corr. litt. 15 avril 1763 et 15 nov. 1765.)

3. M. l'abbé Salvan nie le fait et publie une lettre qu'il s'est fait écrire de Saint-Papoul, dans laquelle on lui affirme que ce n'est pas David, mais sa grand'mère, qui en 1793 et non en 1765, périt ainsi. Est-il croyable qu'un homme déjà revêtu de la charge de Capitoul en 1747 eût encore sa grand'mère quarante ans après? Il devait être septuagénaire, et son aïeule devait avoir plus d'un siècle pour le moins. Aussi tout en publiant la lettre de son correspondant (qui nous réfute sans nous avoir lu, car il demande où nous avons pris nos renseignements), M. Salvan reconnaît qu'il y a erreur : suivant lui, troisième version, ce n'est ni David, ni son aïeule, mais sa femme, qui se tua ainsi en 1793 en apprenant que son petit-fils avait été décapité. Mais comment conciliera-t-il ou le deuxième ou le troisième récit avec les journaux d'octobre et novembre 1765, que nous avons cités plus haut et qui évidemment n'ont rien de commun avec 93?

En 1794, son petit-fils, Tristan David d'Escalonne, périt sur l'échafaud, comme tant d'autres personnages que nous avons eu occasion de nommer. On a dit que la mémoire du Capitoul avait contribué à perdre son descendant, dans ce temps où une foule de victimes n'avaient d'autre crime à se reprocher, que leur nom. Il faut ajouter cependant qu'il s'était publiquement opposé à l'établissement du règne de la Terreur dans Toulouse, avec plus de fermeté qu'il n'en montra plus tard en face du supplice. Cette résistance honorable et hardie suffit pour expliquer sa condamnation. (Voir d'Aldéguier, *Histoire de Toulouse*, t. IV, p. 508, 517, et dans les notes, p. 46.)



## CHAPITRE XIII.

### NANETTE CALAS.

Elle a gagné l'amitié et l'estime de notre communauté par ses excellentes qualités. Nous n'avons eu qu'à regretter que tant de vertus dont elle est remplie ne puissent lui servir que pour cette vie.

S<sup>r</sup> Anne-Julie FRAISSE, de la Visitation. (L. 1.)

A la nouvelle de la mort subite et mystérieuse de leur frère aîné, les demoiselles Calas se firent ramener de Séchaboïs, la propriété de M. Teissier, à Toulouse. Rose avait alors vingt-deux ans, et Nanette vingt et un.

Toute leur famille, jusqu'à leur unique servante, était en prison. Nous ne savons où elles trouvèrent un asile. Ce ne put être, d'abord, dans la maison paternelle qui était gardée, et fort mal, par des soldats. Nous avons vu que tout le monde y entraît, et que dans les premiers jours, où les scellés auraient dû être mis partout, les jeunes gens de la ville et les soldats eux-mêmes s'amusaient à essayer si l'on pouvait se pendre aux battants de la porte avec le billot dont s'était servi Marc-Antoine. Elles durent se pourvoir d'un gîte, et l'on a vu qu'après l'examen des effets de Marc-Antoine, on les leur rendit, pour être portés dans leur nouveau logement. La position des deux jeunes filles était affreuse. Elles se trou-

vaient sans autre appui que leur déplorable frère Louis qu'elles n'avaient pas vu depuis plusieurs années, et dont le caractère ne pouvait leur inspirer que peu de confiance. Quelques rares amis de leur famille leur restèrent fidèles; elles durent vivre de leurs secours, attendant avec angoisse le résultat de ce terrible procès.

Dans la mesure de leur savoir et de leurs ressources elles agirent pour défendre leur père, leur mère et leur frère. Nanette, quoique la plus jeune, paraît s'être chargée d'écrire et de parler. Il existe au procès (devant les Maîtres des Requêtes) une réponse du négociant Griolet que nous avons déjà citée et où il explique à la jeune fille qu'il ne peut comparaître, puisque rien dans le Monitoire ne l'y autorise et qu'il n'a pas été cité. Elle l'avait sollicité de se montrer et de rendre témoignage en faveur de ses parents. Cette lettre, qui renferme des attestations très-honorables pour les Calas, ne put être produite que devant les derniers juges et leur donna quelque idée des vices de la première procédure. L'initiative prise par Nanette finit donc par être utile.

Toutes deux étaient encore à Toulouse au milieu de février. Il paraît que ce fut seulement la sentence de mort de Jean Calas qui les détermina à fuir. Elles quittèrent en secret cette ville, dont la mort sanglante de leur père faisait pour elles un lieu d'épouvante et d'horreur, et trouvèrent un abri chez un M. du Roi, à Montauban, ville où les protestants étaient nombreux et où leur mère avait des amis. Elle vint les y rejoindre après la tragédie du 10 mars et son propre acquittement, prononcé le 18. Mais ses filles ne purent l'entourer longtemps des consolations de leur tendresse. La malheureuse veuve avait encore à boire ce calice d'amertume. Le 27 mars 1762, M. le président du Puget daigna s'occuper d'elles et en occuper Monseigneur le comte de Saint-Florentin, demandant deux lettres de cachet pour

enfermer, dans des couvents séparés, les filles de *ce malheureux père*. Il espère la conversion de Rose, surtout si elle est séparée de Nanette qui est *la plus obstinée* dans sa religion<sup>1</sup>.

Demander des lettres de cachet contre les enfants d'un protestant, c'était les obtenir ; à plus forte raison quand le père avait été roué et quand c'étaient ses propres juges qui s'acharnaient à persécuter les débris de la famille. Nous ne savons s'il est exact que, chez M. du Roï, les demoiselles Calas avaient reçu un grand nombre de visites de sympathie des protestants de la contrée et même d'autres personnes, et que l'évêque de Montauban sollicita contre elles des lettres de cachet pour mettre fin à ce *scandale*, sous prétexte que ces jeunes filles seraient mieux gardées dans des couvents qu'auprès de la famille parfaitement digne qui les avait recueillies.

Les deux jeunes filles furent enlevées à leur mère le 28 mai, à trois heures du matin, par un exempt et huit cavaliers. C'est ici que Louis commit la plus honteuse de ses lâchetés, s'il est vrai, comme Court de Gébelin l'affirme<sup>2</sup>, qu'il consentit à servir de guide aux cavaliers de la maréchaussée, et à faire le guet pendant la nuit, devant la porte de ses sœurs. L'acte était digne du mauvais fils qui avait débuté par un placet où il demandait que tous ses frères et sœurs mineurs fussent enlevés à leurs parents et enfermés dans des couvents. L'auteur des *Toulousaines* ajoute même qu'il avait promis à ses sœurs de les avertir de tout danger. Il avait pu le leur promettre sincèrement et les trahir ensuite par peur, lui qui n'eut jamais d'énergie que pour une chose : demander de l'argent.

Rien n'était plus redouté des familles protestantes, et

1. M. du Puget confond les deux noms. Voir Pièces justificatives, xxv.

2. *Toulousaines*, p. 487.

redouté à plus juste titre, que la séquestration de les enfants entre les mains des moines ou des religieuses<sup>1</sup>.

Dans l'intérieur de ces maisons cloîtrées, le prieur ou la supérieure étaient tout-puissants et pouvaient user de tous les moyens pour obtenir une conversion ; rigueurs ou les cajoleries, la terreur, la calomnie contre les parents absents, tout pouvait être mis en œuvre sans contrôle et sans réclamation possible. Toute communication avec la famille était rigoureusement interdite<sup>2</sup>. Une multitude de mères, depuis 1685 jusqu'en 1789, ont pleuré comme morts leurs enfants encore vivants, mais dont on leur avait aliéné le cœur, et, si plus tard on les leur rendait, plusieurs ont fini par dire d'eux ce que Mme Calas fut obligée de dire de Louis : *Il ne me reconnaît plus pour sa mère.*

1. Une fête magnifique avait été célébrée chez les jésuites dans le collège de Louis-le-Grand, pour glorifier la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes. Ils félicitèrent le roi, par d'ingénieux emblèmes, de ce cri contre la famille et contre la nature. On lisait sur les murs, entre autres inscriptions, celle-ci :

*A la gloire de Louis le Grand, pour avoir tiré les enfants d'entre les bras de l'hérésie et leur avoir procuré une éducation plus heureuse du sein de la véritable religion.* Au-dessous se trouvaient deux devises : la première avait pour corps de jeunes sauvageons entés sur des arbres cultivés, et pour devise, ces mots de Virgile : *Illic venient felicius*, traduits par ce vers prosaïque :

Ils seront en ce lieu beaucoup mieux élevés.

La seconde représentait une branche de corail avec ces paroles :

*Radicato nulla, sradicato tutto vale*, avec cet équivalent en français :

De la main qui l'arrache il reçoit tout son prix.

Voir le *Triomphe de la religion sous Louis le Grand représenté par les inscriptions et des devises* (par le père Le Jay), 1687, 182 p. in-12.

2. Nous avons lu dans les Dépêches du Secrétariat, une lettre très rude du ministre (1<sup>er</sup> juin 1762) où il réprimande vertement la supérieure des Ursulines de Toulouse pour avoir permis à une des protestantes dont elle était la geôlière, Mlle de Massip, de sortir du couvent pendant la journée. Nous citons le fait, à la honte du ministre et à l'honneur de la religieuse.

On peut voir, dans la note 3, un exemple de ce que les familles protestantes avaient de tyrannie à supporter au sujet de ce qui intéressait le plus directement la conscience et le bonheur des parents, l'éducation de leurs enfants.

Sa douleur a été vivement dépeinte dans une lettre écrite de Montauban à cette époque et dont l'auteur ne nous est pas connu :

Le 8 mars 1763.

... Madame Calas, continuellement obsédée par des personnes qui la plongeaient dans la sécurité, s'était persuadée que ses ennemis avaient épuisé toute leur rage sur sa malheureuse famille. Mais elle a été cruellement déçue lorsque ce matin, avant le jour, la maréchaussée de Toulouse lui a enlevé ses deux filles et les a conduites au couvent de Notre-Dame de Toulouse.

Dépeignez-vous, s'il est possible, la situation affreuse de cette pauvre mère, qui, outre la douleur de perdre ses chères filles, a à se reprocher d'avoir méprisé non-seulement mes avis, mais encore ceux du curé de la Dalbade qui, quatre ou cinq jours auparavant, lui avait écrit de fuir au plus vite avec ses filles, si elle voulait les conserver. Elle n'a montré la lettre de cet honnête homme qu'après son malheur : on ne doute pas que Louis Calas n'ait trempé dans ce noir complot.

Nous avons des avis certains que le pauvre Pierre est encore chez les Dominicains de Toulouse, très-mauvais catholique romain, et se plaignant de ce qu'on ne lui laisse pas la liberté de s'en aller pour subir son bannissement <sup>1</sup>.

Nous avons heureusement à raconter, en finissant cette douloureuse histoire, des faits d'une autre nature. On ne sait que le nom du couvent de Toulouse où Rose Calas fut enfermée, c'était celui qu'on appelait Notre-Dame de la rue du Sac<sup>2</sup>. Mais il paraît qu'elle n'eut point à s'en louer<sup>3</sup>. Elle y éprouva beaucoup de dureté, dit Grimm<sup>4</sup>. Pour Nanette, il en fut tout autrement.

Elles durent frémir l'une et l'autre de rentrer, sous

1. Ce fragment et deux autres lettres de la même main ont paru pour la première fois dans l'appendice de notre recueil de *Lettres inédites de Voltaire*. Ils nous avaient été communiqués par M. Alfred Tachard, pasteur à Uchaud, dont la famille est originaire de Montauban.

2. Quittance de 102 livres pour sept mois, moins sept jours, de pension, en date du 22 décembre 1762.

Signé DE RESSEGUIER, supérieure.

(Collection de M. Fournier.)

3. Lettre de la sœur Fraisse, 30.

4. *Corr. litt.*, 25 mars.



l'escorte de la maréchaussée, dans cette ville funeste où leur père était mort sur la roue, où leur frère Pierre était détenu malgré la loi dans un monastère, et d'où le reste de leur famille avait dû fuir. Bientôt, cependant, Nanette commença à se réconcilier avec sa prison. Elle était aux Visitandines<sup>1</sup>, et on avait confié sa conversion à une religieuse âgée, très-fervente catholique, mais douée d'un grand sens et d'un cœur tout maternel. La sœur Anne-Julie Fraisse ne réussit nullement, malgré ses consciencieux efforts et ses ardentes prières, à faire une catholique de la fille du martyr protestant. Elle ne parvint pas même à ébranler ses convictions. Mais elle sut la comprendre, estimer son caractère élevé et charmant, l'aimer, et la rendre aussi heureuse que pouvait l'être Anne Calas dans un couvent.

De son côté, la jeune huguenote fut profondément émue et reconnaissante des bontés de mère que lui témoigna la vénérable sœur. Il n'eût pas été fort étonnant que la fille d'un protestant mis à mort pour parricide se trouvât blessée des propos, des regards, et de l'accueil qu'elle rencontrerait parmi ces religieuses. Elle-même s'y attendait; mais elle n'eut rien de pareil à souffrir. La mère Anne d'Hunaud, supérieure du monastère, était une personne charitable et bonne, et Nanette par sa piété, sa douceur de caractère, sa réserve et sa grâce, eut bientôt gagné tous les cœurs chez les dames de la Visitation.

Anne Julie devint pour elle une seconde mère, une amie active et zélée, dont l'affection ne se dément jamais, et ne fut interrompue que par la mort. Entre la vieille Visitandine et Nanette Calas eut lieu da

1. Le couvent où elle fut placée avait donné son nom à la place de la Visitation; il devint une prison en 1789 et n'a pas été rendu à cet ordre qui en occupe aujourd'hui un autre dans un quartier différent.

le couvent de Toulouse le même entretien que Voltaire avait eu avec Donat. Elle écouta les douloureux récits des malheurs de la famille, mêla ses larmes à celles de la pauvre orpheline, l'interrogea sur ses parents, sur leur conduite envers son frère catholique ; et elle aussi, la droite et noble femme, jugea Calas et ses juges, reconnut l'innocence du condamné et la folie de ses persécuteurs. Admirable exemple de ce que valent la supériorité et l'entière sincérité de l'esprit ! Mais il ne suffit pas à la sœur Fraisse de croire les Calas innocents :

La foi qui n'agit point est-ce une foi sincère ?

Elle agit, elle écrivit du fond de sa cellule. Elle était proche parente de M. Castanier d'Auriac, président au grand Conseil, et gendre du chancelier de Lamoignon. Ce fut auprès de lui qu'elle sollicita de son côté<sup>1</sup>, pendant que Voltaire agissait du sien, Voltaire qu'elle avait en horreur pour son incrédulité et au sujet duquel Anne Calas fut bien grondée un jour par la bonne sœur. Nanette l'avait appelé illustre ; illustre, un ennemi de l'Église et de Dieu<sup>2</sup> !

On se trompera du tout au tout si l'on prend la sœur Anne-Julie pour un esprit fort, si on lui suppose la moindre sympathie pour *les lumières du siècle* ; elle les a en abomination profonde. Elle est très-sérieusement et très-véritablement dévote catholique. Elle n'a pas le plus léger doute sur la damnation éternelle de sa jeune amie, non pour ses péchés, elle la trouve pleine de vertus et lui reconnaît même de la piété, mais à cause de sa religion. Ce qui est caractéristique, c'est qu'elle ne peut s'empêcher de le dire, dans sa lettre même à

1. Voir *Lettres de la sœur A.-J. Fraisse*, n° 1, 24 déc. 1762. Elle lui écrivit encore à diverses reprises, surtout quand le Conseil fut saisi de l'affaire. (*Lettres 11, 12, etc.*)

2. Lettre 33.

son cousin le conseiller d'État. Cette lettre n'en est pas moins, de la part d'une religieuse de Toulouse et dans un pareil moment, un acte admirable de raison, de dévouement et de courage.

En décembre, c'est-à-dire au bout de sept mois, les demoiselles Calas furent mises en liberté, à condition de vivre à Paris chez une dame Dumas et non avec leur mère<sup>1</sup>. Nanette ne quitta pas sans émotion les Visitandines et surtout celle qui était devenue pour elle une précieuse amie et une zélée protectrice. Voltaire salua avec joie cet acte de justice comme un bon augure pour une réparation plus complète<sup>2</sup>. Ce fut sans doute à l'influence très-favorable de ses lettres sur quelques-uns des ministres qu'est due la libération des jeunes filles<sup>3</sup>. La sœur Fraisse remit à sa chère Nanette une lettre pour son cousin, et la jeune fille, arrivée à Paris, la porta au président d'Auriac qui la reçut avec quelque froideur de manières, *suivant sa coutume*<sup>4</sup>, mais non sans intérêt. Une copie de cette lettre excita un grand enthousiasme parmi les amis des Calas. Elle y fut vivement admirée. Voltaire en était ravi.

J'envoie à mes frères la copie de la lettre d'une bonne religieuse. Je crois cette lettre bien essentielle à notre affaire. Il me semble que la simplicité, la vertueuse indulgence de cette nonne

1. Lettres du 26 déc. à Damilaville et du 29 à Mme de Florian.

2. La collection de M. Fournier contient quatre pièces signées Louis et contresignées *Phélyppeaux* (St-Florentin), par lesquelles le roi ordonne : 1° au sieur Gérard Guyonnet, marchand de Toulouse, de retirer la Dlle Nanette Calas du couvent de la Visitation de Toulouse, et de la faire conduire à ses frais chez la dame Dumas, ancienne catholique, demeurant rue Neuve et paroisse Saint-Eustache à Paris ; 2° au même, de remplir la même mission à l'égard de Rose Calas ; 3° à la dame Dumas de recevoir et garder les Dlls Calas jusqu'à nouvel ordre (8 déc. 1762), et 4° à la même, de leur rendre leur liberté (19 mai 1765).

3. Nous ne devons pas oublier cependant de signaler aussi l'intervention d'un adversaire de Voltaire. On trouvera dans les Pièces justificatives à la fin du volume XXXIX, un *Placet* que La Beaumelle adressa au comte de Saint-Florentin, au nom des Dlls Calas.

4. Lettre 3.

de la Visitation condamne terriblement le fanatisme des assassins en robe de Toulouse <sup>1</sup>.

Il dit à Élie de Beaumont le 21 janvier :

**V**ous avez vu sans doute la lettre de la religieuse de Toulouse. Elle me paraît importante ; et je vois avec plaisir que les sœurs de la Visitation n'ont pas le cœur si dur que *Messieurs*. J'espère que le conseil pensera comme les dames de la Visitation.

La lettre de la sœur Anne-Julie fut considérée comme si importante pour les Calas qu'on la fit imprimer sur un feuillet volant, et qu'on l'ajouta au Recueil de pièces et de Mémoires publiés sur cette affaire.

Dès qu'elles furent sorties du couvent, les deux jeunes filles écrivirent au grand protecteur de leur mère pour le remercier. Il y répondit par la lettre suivante<sup>2</sup>, écrite sur un papier dont chaque page est encadrée dans une guirlande de fleurs avec des œillets aux quatre coins, fantaisie qui serait d'assez mauvais goût, s'il n'avait su d'un mot la relever et la rendre gracieuse :

Je vous réponds, Mesdemoiselles, sur du papier orné de fleurs parce que le temps des épines est passé, et qu'on rendra justice à votre respectable mère et à vous. Je vous félicite d'être auprès d'elle. Je me flatte que votre présence a touché tous les juges, et qu'on réparera l'abomination de Toulouze. Je vois avec un extrême plaisir que le public s'intéresse à vous aussi vivement que moi. Je fais mes plus sincères compliments à madame votre mère, et suis avec beaucoup de zèle, Mesdemoiselles, votre très humble et très-obéissant serviteur ,

VOLTAIRE, gentilhomme ordinaire du Roi.

1. A Damilaville (Cayrol 372). Voir aussi sa lettre à d'Argental le 20 janvier.

2. Cette lettre, et une autre à M<sup>me</sup> Duvoisin que nous publions p. 293, avaient été données par elle à M. Marron, successeur de son mari comme chapelain de l'ambassade de Hollande ; elles sont à Leyde dans la riche collection créée par M. L.-C. Luzac qui a acheté les nombreux autographes réunis par Marron. Ces deux lettres sont inédites, ainsi qu'une troisième à M. de Saint-Florentin, que nous publions p. 363. Une autre lettre de Voltaire à M<sup>me</sup> Duvoisin se trouve dans les recueils de sa cor-

Mme Calas reçut de nombreuses lettres de félicitations au sujet de la mise en liberté de ses filles ; nous signalerons celles du duc de la Vallière, et, ce qui est plus remarquable à Toulouse même, de la marquise de Saint-Véran-Gozon, lettres remplies d'offres de service chaleureuse. (Collection de M. Fournier.)

Bientôt M. de Saint-Florentin fut vivement sollicité par la duchesse d'Anville et par le duc d'Estissac, son beau-frère, pour qu'il achevât de rendre les deux jeunes filles à leur mère. Le 30 juin 1763, il écrivit à la duchesse, se référant à la réponse qu'il adressait le même jour au duc, et qui est bâtonnée dans le volume des *Dépêches du secrétariat*, avec ces mots en marge : *n'a servi*. Nous sommes fort tenté de croire que c'est là une ruse d'administrateur, uniquement destinée à éviter un précédent et à sauver les apparences ; quoi qu'il en soit, nous sommes persuadé que les ordres donnés ont été conformes à cette lettre si singulièrement dissimulée.

La dame Calas, monsieur, dont les filles ont été mises par ordre du Roi chez la dame Dumas, à Paris, me fait solliciter pour qu'elles lui soient rendues. Madame la duchesse d'Anville a pris la peine de m'écrire. Je vous prie de lui témoigner qu'il ne me paraît pas possible de révoquer l'ordre qui retient ces filles chez la dame Dumas et que j'y trouve des inconvénients qu'il est à propos d'éviter. Mais comme je vois qu'elle s'intéresse très-vivement à cette affaire et que je désire très-sincèrement l'obliger, la dame Calas peut retirer ses filles auprès d'elle, et je consens à feindre de l'ignorer<sup>1</sup> pourvu que d'ailleurs la dame Calas se comporte avec circonspection et ne les produise pas dans le monde avec trop d'éclat.

Ces derniers mots prouvent à la fois l'accueil que recevaient partout Mme Calas et ses filles, et les craintes

respondance, sous la date du 15 juin 1772. Il lui annonce l'heureuse issue du procès des Sirven, semblable en tout à celui des Calas, moins le supplice du principal accusé.

1. Au-dessous de ces quatre mots on en lit un autre rayé, c'est le mot : *dissimuler*.

qu'inspirait au ministre la sympathie qu'on leur témoignait.

Nous ne répéterons pas ici ce qu'on a vu plus haut de la présence des demoiselles Calas dans la galerie de Versailles pendant qu'on y décidait la révision du procès. Ce fut Rose qui se trouva mal. Nanette paraît avoir supporté avec plus d'énergie toutes les angoisses qui remplirent ces cruels moments. On les a vues enfin accompagner toutes deux leur mère dans cette prison de la Conciergerie, où Carmontelle les a représentées à ses côtés.

Depuis la réhabilitation de leur famille, il n'est fait aucune mention d'elles<sup>1</sup> jusqu'au mariage de Nanette qui eut lieu le 25 février 1767.

Elle épousa Jean-Jacques Duvoisin, né à Yverdon (Suisse), chapelain de l'ambassade de Hollande<sup>2</sup>, c'est-à-dire en réalité pasteur de l'Église réformée de Paris. C'est, en effet, aux ambassades des États du Nord que les protestants de Paris ont dû de ne pas rester complètement dépourvus des secours du saint ministère, et d'avoir toujours eu au milieu d'eux des pasteurs en exercice. La Hollande surtout leur rendit cet éminent service. Elle avait été, comme Genève, l'asile des proscrits de la France, même avant Bayle et Descartes, elle possédait, dans plusieurs villes importantes, des Eglises *Wallonnes* ou de langue française, dès le temps des persécutions qui décimèrent les Pays-Bas espagnols. Aussi les sympathies de la Hollande pour la France protestante ne se démentirent jamais. Les États-Généraux entretin-

1. Sauf un *Brevet de permission* que nous avons trouvé dans les *Dépêches du Secrétariat*, sous la date du 21 novembre 1764, par lequel le comte de Saint-Florentin autorise Anne Calas « à vendre une métairie appelée le Colombier, située à Espérausses en Languedoc, qu'elle a héritée de Anne Pomier, à charge de placer le produit en rentes sur l'Hôtel-de-Ville de Paris. »

On se souvient que les protestants ne pouvaient aliéner leurs biens-fonds qu'avec une permission spéciale du ministre.

2. Voir sur Duvoisin, la note 33.

rent deux chapelains d'ambassade à Paris pour maintenir l'Église persécutée ; et le dernier d'entre eux, Paul-Henri Marron, devint le premier pasteur de cette Église quand elle fut reconstituée en 1802.

Une lettre de Lavaysse père (collection de M. Fournier) nous apprend qu'à Toulouse la nouvelle de ce mariage fit beaucoup de bruit, et causa une grande joie aux protestants. Il paraît que les protecteurs des Calas leur avaient procuré un brevet du roi qui donnait son approbation expresse à l'union projetée. Ils firent bien. A Toulouse on s'était vengé des succès de Mme Calas par une infâme calomnie contre Nanette. Le mariage de Nanette, le caractère de son mari, enfin le brevet du roi réduisirent à néant ces abominables mensonges. « Rien n'est plus honorable, Madame, écrit David Lavaysse à Mme Calas en la félicitant sur ce mariage, que le brevet par lequel le Roy y a donné son approbation ; le fanatisme de cette ville en a frémi. Mon fils Vidou a voulu vous informer de quelle manière ce fanatisme a cru se consoler en faisant courir un bruit odieux et insensé et qui n'a pas laissé cependant de courir de bouche en bouche et de trouver créance chez un très-grand nombre de gens qui ne cessent de clabauder là-dessus. Je marquais ces derniers jours à mon fils ce que je croyais et que je crois encore qu'il conviendrait de faire pour confondre une si noire imposture. La lettre par laquelle mon fils m'apprit le mariage de Mme Duvoisin a servi utilement à déprévenir tout ce qu'il y a de gens sensés qui l'ont vue, car j'en ai laissé prendre des copies à tous ceux qui l'ont demandé et elles ont beaucoup couru ; mais tout le monde ne l'a pas vue et le grand nombre n'aurait pas voulu la voir, pour pouvoir persister dans sa calomnie. »

Ce mariage réjouit aussi Voltaire. En félicitant Mme Calas, il lui écrivait : « Je voudrais que tous vos enfants se mariassent et que votre nom se perpétuât à

jamais, pour servir d'un témoignage éternel à votre probité et à l'iniquité infâme des juges qui auraient dû avoir sur l'épaule les fleurs de lys sur lesquelles ils osent s'asseoir (2 février 1767. — Collection de M. Fournier). On voit que les années n'avaient en rien amorti la fougueuse verve du vieux défenseur des Calas.

Mme Duvoisin ne se montra point ingrate, continua à correspondre avec la sœur Fraisse, et aussi, quoique à de longs intervalles, avec le bienfaiteur de tous les siens. Voici une nouvelle lettre inédite de Voltaire qui n'a d'importance que par une allusion aux malheurs d'une autre famille protestante, victime d'un procès inique.

« Le vieux malade de Ferney fait mille compliments à madame Duvoisin, à madame sa mère et à toute sa famille. Il est fâché de laisser en mourant tant d'infortunés dans le monde, et surtout une dame aussi intéressante et aussi vertueuse que madame Bombelles.

Son très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur,  
V. <sup>1</sup>.

Au bout de treize ans, Mme Duvoisin devint veuve. Le pasteur Duvoisin, dont la santé avait été longtemps chancelante, mourut le 12 mai 1780, dans son logement de la rue Poissonnière. Il avait eu de son second mariage trois fils : le premier mourut au bout de quelques jours<sup>2</sup>; le second vécut moins de trois ans; le dernier seul arriva à l'âge d'homme<sup>3</sup>.

1. Voir la note 34.

2. A l'occasion de la naissance de l'aîné, Voltaire écrivait à Mme Calas :

Je sais bien bon gré à Mme Duvoisin de vous avoir donné un petit-fils. Je souhaite qu'élevé par son père et sous vos yeux il devienne un ministre éloquent qui enseigne la tolérance aux hommes. Cette divine tolérance sera mieux reçue dans sa bouche que dans toute autre. Ce sera le fils de Caton qui prêchera la liberté. (Extrait d'une lettre de la collection Fournier.)

3. Voir sur Alexandre Duvoisin la note 35 à la fin du volume. J'ai donné, au bas des lettres de la sœur Fraisse qui se rapportent à leur naissance, les actes de baptême des enfants de Mme Duvoisin; M. Ch. Read a bien voulu en prendre copie sur le registre des baptêmes de l'ambassade de Hollande, au dépôt de l'état civil. (Hôtel-de-Ville de Paris).



On trouvera avec intérêt dans les lettres de la religieuse la cordiale part qu'elle prit à tous les événements de la vie d'Anne Calas, à ses joies et à ses deuils de mère et même à ce mariage avec un pasteur, qui cependant renversait l'espoir qu'elle avait conçu de la marier à un catholique. On verra avec quelque surprise peut-être, lorsque la mauvaise santé et les couches de Mme Duvoisin inquiètent sa vénérable amie, des lettres adressées à un pasteur dans l'exercice de ses fonctions, partir du fond d'un monastère de Toulouse.

La sœur Anne-Julie mourut probablement en 1775 ou peu après, à moins que ses infirmités croissantes ne l'aient empêchée dès ce moment d'écrire à sa chère Nanette.

Restée veuve en 1780, avec un fils de sept ans, Mme Duvoisin vécut assez péniblement auprès de sa mère, à Paris, du peu qu'elle possédait et d'une pension de 200 florins (400 fr.) que lui accordèrent les États-Généraux en 1784.

Bientôt arrivèrent la révolution française et tous les changements qu'elle amena en Europe. Le *Corps législatif de la république batave* décida, le 8 octobre 1790, que la pension de Mme Duvoisin lui serait continuée. Malgré cette assurance, la veuve du chapelain eut souvent à réclamer des arrérages, et l'on trouve aux Archives de la Haye plusieurs pétitions appuyées par l'ambassadeur, où elle demande le paiement des sommes qui lui étaient dues (1798, 1801). Mme Duvoisin vivait à Paris en 1819<sup>1</sup> dans une position d'autant plus gênée qu'elle s'imposa souvent, pour son fils Alexandre, des sacrifices trop considérables.

1. *Annales protestantes*, p. 151. J'ai cherché en vain ce qu'étaient devenues ses lettres à la sœur Fraisse. On pense à Toulouse que les papiers du couvent ont été brûlés le 10 août 1793 avec beaucoup d'autres écrits et une partie des Archives de l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Si les lettres de Mme Duvoisin avaient été conservées jusqu'alors, il est probable qu'elles ont péri dans cette scène de destruction.

Il existe dans la Collection de M. Fournier une note de sa main où elle explique l'opposition qu'elle met à la saisie du mobilier dont faisaient usage son fils et sa belle-fille, auxquels elle avait cédé une partie de son appartement rue de l'Échiquier, 24 ; elle prouve que ce mobilier est à elle. Malgré le langage digne et contenu de cette note, on y reconnaît les traces évidentes de bien des douleurs et d'un dévouement maternel qui avait accepté depuis longtemps bien des privations.

Une représentation du drame de Ducange fut donnée à son bénéfice vers la fin de cette année. Elle mourut en 1820. Elle avait perdu en avril 1800 sa sœur Rose qui vivait avec elle.





## CHAPITRE XIV.

### HISTOIRE DE L'OPINION EN FRANCE AU SUJET DES CALAS.

**Divers écrits pour et contre. — Les Calas sur la scène en France, et à l'étranger. — Leurs nouveaux accusateurs : Joseph de Maistre, MM. Mary-Lafon, du Mège, Huc, de Bastard, l'abbé Salvan ; leurs défenseurs : MM. Plougoum, Charles Coquerel, Prévost Paradol.**

Que pensez-vous de l'affaire des Calas et de l'affaire du chevalier Labarre ? Êtes-vous, oui ou non, pour la révocation de l'Édit de Nantes ? Voilà quelques-unes des conversations pleines d'*actualité* que l'on peut entendre.... dans le Paris du dix-neuvième siècle.

Emile MONTÉGUT,

*Revue des Deux Mondes* 1855, t. 10, p. 778.

#### I. 1775-1858.

S'il n'y avait dans ce procès que l'affaire elle-même, si les préventions ecclésiastiques, l'esprit de corps et l'amour-propre de localité n'y étaient intervenus, l'histoire des Calas s'arrêterait ici, leur innocence démontrée n'eût jamais été remise en question, et notre tâche serait terminée.

Il n'en est point ainsi, et nous devons raconter encore le revirement d'opinion qui a fait considérer de nos jours, par beaucoup de personnes, comme perdue ou du moins comme douteuse, une cause que Voltaire et le dix-huitième siècle croyaient avoir gagnée.

En général, il faut en convenir, le procédé suivi dans une foule de publications, pour ou contre, est le même. Un partisan des Calas, comme d'Aldéguier<sup>1</sup> dans son *Histoire de Toulouse*, Court de Gébelin dans les *Toulousaines*, M. de Pongerville dans l'article CALAS du *Dictionnaire de la Conversation*, répète ou résume avec une généreuse indignation et plus ou moins d'emphase ce qui a été dit de plus saillant pour la défense. Les adversaires font de même pour l'accusation. Mais personne n'avait entrepris encore d'examiner en détail, avec un esprit de critique impartiale, les dépositions des témoins, les mémoires des avocats, les récits des historiens. Nous avons été obligé d'écarter nombre d'anecdotes touchantes, favorables aux accusés, qui avaient été reproduites successivement par tous leurs champions et auxquelles il ne manquait que d'être réelles. Ce mélange de vrai et de faux, de déclamations hasardées et de faits démontrés n'a pu que nuire à la cause.

Au moment de la mort de Voltaire, partout excepté à Toulouse, toutes les sympathies étaient pour les Calas. On a vu qu'au moment où ses cendres firent leur entrée triomphale à Paris et furent portées au Panthéon, les théâtres se firent les échos de l'enthousiasme général. L'homme qui, presque adolescent, avait fait *OEdipe*, et qui écrivit *Irène* dans l'âge de la caducité, était en lui-même un personnage peu dramatique et difficile à mettre en scène, quoiqu'on l'y ait représenté souvent. Mais le meurtre juridique de Calas parut à plusieurs un beau sujet de tragédie, sujet très-nouveau, très-populaire, qui fournissait l'occasion de louer l'idole du jour et de continuer la guerre, juste et bonne cette fois, qu'il n'avait cessé de faire au fanatisme. On mit

1. Disons cependant que d'Aldéguier a publié dans les notes de son livre : 1° le rapport des chirurgiens ; 2° la déposition de Gorsse ; 3° le Monitoire ; 4° un interrogatoire de Calas ; 5° les arrêts du 18 novembre 1761 et du 20 mars 1762.

sous le nom de Calas des déclamations ampoulées, et souvent sceptiques, qui n'étaient nullement conformes à ses convictions ni à son caractère.

Marie-Joseph Chénier fut le premier qui s'en avisa. Tandis qu'il travaillait à aligner ses hexamètres philosophiques, fort beaux quelquefois, mais souvent prosaïques et surtout déclamatoires, deux autres écrivains le gagnèrent de vitesse. Avant qu'il eût fini son œuvre, parurent à la fois au Théâtre-Français (Odéon) *Jean Calas*, tragédie en cinq actes et en vers, par J.-L. Laya, et au théâtre du Palais-Royal, *Calas ou le fanatisme*, drame en quatre actes et en prose, par Lemierre d'Argy. Enfin, le Théâtre de la République donna la pièce de Chénier, *Jean Calas ou l'École des Juges*. Monvel jouait Calas, et Talma la Salle. Depuis, bien d'autres mirent sur la scène quelque épisode de ce pathétique sujet ; ce fut tantôt *la Bienfaisance de Voltaire*, par Villemain d'Abancourt, tantôt *la Veuve Calas à Paris*, par Pujoux<sup>1</sup>.

Nous citons ces titres pour prouver qu'à cette époque le public ne se lassait pas d'applaudir l'acte généreux qui coûta à Voltaire tant d'efforts et lui valut sa gloire la plus belle et la plus pure. Du reste, aucune de ces pièces n'a de valeur littéraire, et celle de Chénier, malgré quelques beaux vers, est déparée par l'abus de la maxime et de la tirade philosophique. Cette faute dont Voltaire ne fut jamais exempt, et que dans sa vieillesse il porta jusqu'à l'excès, fut poussée si loin par ses disciples qu'elle rend leurs œuvres insupportables. On exagère à peine en affirmant que, dans le *Calas* de Chénier, tout le monde est voltairien, depuis le martyr huguenot jusqu'à son confesseur, moine de Saint-Dominique ! Ce qui est plus révoltant encore, la malheureuse et pieuse mère de Marc-Antoine y parle

1. Pour ces pièces et plusieurs autres, voyez Bibliographie, V<sup>e</sup> section.

longuement de se tuer à son tour et discute la question du suicide avec un flegme sentencieux.

Ces défauts, si choquants aujourd'hui, étaient alors invisibles pour la foule, comme l'air que tout le monde respirait; c'était la seule langue qu'il fût permis de parler, et le public n'en applaudissait que plus chaleureusement les vers du futur conventionnel.

Un autre tort de toutes ces tentatives théâtrales, moins essentiel en morale et inévitable en littérature, fut de contribuer à changer très-vite l'histoire des Calas en une véritable légende surchargée d'éléments imaginaires. En 1819 le *Calas* de Victor Ducange, drame en trois actes<sup>1</sup>, conservait à peine quelques traces de l'histoire réelle. Marc-Antoine y est amoureux; on exige de lui qu'il abjure pour épouser Hortense. De désespoir il se pend, après avoir écrit la lettre qu'écrivent tous les suicidés de théâtre, lettre qui s'égare et qu'on retrouve précisément au moment où Jean Calas, qu'elle devait sauver, expire sur l'échafaud. Lavaysse épouse Mlle Calas; il n'y a pas jusqu'à la vieille Jeannette qui n'y se marie de quarante ans et fiancée au jardinier. Nombre de gens qui se croient fort instruits de l'affaire des Calas ont appris à l'école de Ducange tout ce qu'ils peuvent en savoir.

Pour notre part, il nous est impossible de ne pas désapprouver ces représentations scéniques d'événements contemporains. Il y a quelque chose d'odieux à faire apparaître ainsi devant les fils, les erreurs et les crimes de leurs propres pères. Nous blâmons tous ces drames joués à Paris, en province, en Hollande, en Allemagne où les Calas, David, Cassan Clairac, et tous les membres de Tournelle de Toulouse figuraient, soit de leur vivant, soit peu d'années après leur mort. Nous sommes heureux de trouver dans une lettre du fils de N

1. Ce drame est souvent repris à Paris et ailleurs, même de nos jours.

nette Duvoisin l'expression honnête et vive de ce sentiment<sup>1</sup>.

Il est beaucoup plus étrange de trouver dans une brochure intitulée *Jean Calas ou l'innocent condamné*, par A. S. (vers 1820) un récit de quelques pages, où sont enchevêtrés d'une façon inextricable le romanesque et le réel, l'histoire et la légende. On y lit tout un dialogue de Marc-Antoine avec le père d'Eugénie (l'amante imaginaire s'appelle Eugénie cette fois); le jeune homme refuse d'abjurer. Tout égaré au sortir de cet entretien, il erre à l'aventure; un ami le rencontre et, pour le calmer, n' imagine rien de mieux que de le mener dans une maison de jeu, etc. Ce qu'il y a de plus curieux dans cette rapsodie, c'est un prétendu interrogatoire de Jean Calas, qu'il me semblait reconnaître en le lisant et que j'étais certain d'avoir vu quelque part; mais à coup sûr ce n'était pas aux *Archives*, parmi les pièces du procès. Je cherche, je relis, je crois trouver des traces d'hémistiches, d'hexamètres à peine estropiés. C'était une scène de Chénier, qu'on avait traduite en prose, sans trop de peine, il faut l'avouer, et qu'on

1. « Le *Journal des Débats* étant probablement répandu à Toulouse, c'est là que j'ai dû consigner que la famille Calas était de tout temps demeurée étrangère aux motifs politiques qui avaient inspiré à quelques auteurs de reproduire sur la scène ses infortunes. Il s'en lie déjà trop à un nom devenu si tristement célèbre, pour le faire poursuivre de nouveau par des animosités mal à propos réveillées.

« Et Calas et ses juges et son illustre avocat, dorment du sommeil éternel. Leur part de renommée est faite sans retour. La famille de Calas ne demandait que l'oubli. Son petit-fils espère avoir fait son devoir en protestant avec la modestie qui lui convient contre toute participation à une autre règle de conduite. »

Cette lettre (sans date) d'Alexandre Duvoisin, que je dois à la bienveillance de M. Henri Lutteroth, est signée *le petit-fils de Calas* et adressée à *Monsieur le rédacteur de l'article Spectacles de la feuille la Renommée*. Ce journaliste avait blâmé une première réclamation d'Alexandre adressée au *Journal des Débats*, au sujet du *mélodrame des Calas*; ce doit être celui de Ducange. Plus j'approuve le sentiment exprimé dans cette lettre, plus je dois m'étonner que ce même Alexandre Duvoisin ait écrit plus tard sur l'histoire de sa famille une pièce de théâtre et l'ait jouée lui-même. *Malesuada fames!*



donnait au public pour un interrogatoire authentique. Ce n'est pas la seule fois que pareille fraude a dû être commise et sans être soupçonnée.

Voilà le roman et le drame littéraires, frivoles, parisiens, sans autre but que d'intéresser. Nous retrouvons plus loin la légende toulousaine, sérieuse et partielle, tantôt pathétique et enthousiaste, s'élevant jusqu'à l'éloquence, tantôt hostile et haineuse, lentement élaborée, de génération en génération, dans les salons et dans les couvents, par un parti qui se sentait vaincu sans vouloir s'y résigner.

Le premier qui releva le gant jeté par Voltaire, qui osa contredire l'opinion de l'Europe, ne fut autre que le comte Joseph de Maistre. Il dit dans ses *Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* et dès le *premier Entretien* :

« Rien de moins prouvé, Messieurs, je vous l'assure, que l'innocence de Calas. Il y a mille raisons d'en douter, et même en croire le contraire. »

Puis il s'indigne de ce que Voltaire a plaisanté dans une de ses lettres au sujet des Calas, et il rapporte lui-même inexactement une lettre du poète à Tronchin, où il est question d'un Mémoire qu'on a trouvé trop chaud, et d'un autre qui sera au *bain-marie*<sup>1</sup>. Ce reproche de légèreté adressé à Voltaire est juste ; c'est l'incurable maladie de ce grand esprit ; c'est un des côtés par où il est petit, faible comme historien et nul comme critique, dans tout ce qui n'est pas de son propre temps. Mais Joseph de Maistre est tout aussi faible, tout aussi mauvais critique, lorsqu'il conclut de ce que Voltaire badine sans cesse et sur toutes choses, qu'il n'a pas des idées très-sérieuses et une volonté très-arrêtée. Il est vrai que quand il rencontre dans l'histoire des Calas leur faux serment à l'hôtel de ville<sup>2</sup>,

1. Nous avons cité ce passage plus haut, p. 231.

2. Voir plus haut, p. 80.

il s'impatiente et les appelle crûment des *imbéciles*, ce qui ne l'empêchera pas de leur consacrer pendant quatre ans son temps qu'il prisait fort, sa plume toujours occupée et son argent qu'il n'aimait nullement dissiper au hasard. Il faut le dire d'ailleurs, malgré le *bon-marie*, cette plaisanterie d'assez mauvais goût à l'adresse des lecteurs catholiques, qui révolte l'auteur du livre *du Pape*, Voltaire a été profondément sérieux, au moins une fois en sa vie; il a été saisi d'une émotion sincère, d'une indignation honnête et ardente; il n'est pas permis de le nier. On peut en citer d'autres exemples, mais aucun qui lui fasse autant d'honneur. Pardonnons-lui donc ces quelques railleries, fussent-elles peu à leur place; et plutôt au ciel qu'il n'eût pas à se reprocher mille autres légèretés infiniment plus condamnables aux yeux du goût, de la morale et de la religion!

Le mot du comte de Maistre resta longtemps sans écho, et l'arrêt de l'opinion publique en faveur des Calas demeurerait sans appel. Cependant, on avait peine, dans la ville même où Calas avait été condamné, à accepter sa réhabilitation. C'est encore de là que viennent sans cesse aujourd'hui les réclamations contre ce grand acte de justice.

Nous nous arrêterons peu à réfuter M. Mary-Lafon, qui, en 1845, dans son *Histoire du midi de la France*, Bibliogr. n° 79), se déclara contre les Calas, tout en disant qu'il ne voulait pas casser la réhabilitation de cette malheureuse famille parce qu'il tremblerait d'outrager la mémoire d'un innocent.

Toute sa discussion est très-superficielle; il paraît n'avoir vu qu'en partie, et beaucoup trop vite, les deux procédures toulousaines; il ignore celles bien plus complètes de Versailles et de Paris. Il accepte, sans aucune critique, tout ce qu'il trouve dans telle ou telle déposition et se fait même un argument du fameux passage de Calvin qu'il comprend mal, comme tous ceux qui ne

respondances qu'on incrimine. Jusque-là, nous nierons le fait. Et d'ailleurs où a-t-on vu les ennemis de la France stipuler quoi que ce soit, dans un traité, en faveur des protestants français?

Ces paroles peuvent faire juger de l'impartialité de l'auteur au point de vue religieux. Voici qui montrera sa façon de penser comme Toulousain. Il dit de l'arrêt de réhabilitation :

Ce fut dans Paris une joie universelle. Des sentiments bien opposés se manifestèrent en Languedoc. Toulouse, calomniée dans son passé, insultée dans le présent, menacée dans son avenir, montra une grande irritation.

Que sera la justice toujours faillible des hommes, si c'est l'insulter que réparer, autant qu'on le peut, ses erreurs? n'est-ce pas l'honorer au contraire? Il nous est impossible de comprendre en quoi une sentence qui réhabilitait des innocents condamnés par le Parlement de Toulouse, insultait la ville dans le présent et la menaçait pour l'avenir. Ce langage est celui de la passion. Ni la justice ni l'histoire ne parlent ainsi.

Du Mége entre en matière par une phrase caractéristique et qui peut nous dispenser d'en signaler bien d'autres analogues. Il s'agit de la mort de Marc-Antoine et l'on veut faire croire qu'il a été étranglé :

Dans la nuit du 13 au 14, « à l'heure même où l'arrestation du ministre Rochette à Caussade allait devenir le signal de l'insurrection des paysans calvinistes.... »

L'auteur nous permettra trois questions sur ce début :

1° Qu'est-ce que l'heure où un événement *va devenir le signal* d'un autre événement?

2° Veut-on dire que le pasteur Rochette, pendu à Toulouse quelques mois après, a choisi le moment de son arrestation et s'est laissé saisir à dessein à l'heure même où mourut Marc-Antoine?

3° A qui fera-t-on prendre pour une *insurrection des paysans calvinistes* le mouvement avorté que tentèrent quelques personnes pour délivrer, dans le trajet, le ministre arrêté, mouvement que trois gentilshommes payèrent de leur tête sur l'échafaud de Toulouse le 19 février?

Voici maintenant la nouvelle explication des faits. Elle consiste à innocenter les accusés et Calas lui-même, en ce sens qu'il ne serait plus le bourreau, mais seulement le dénonciateur de son fils. L'auteur admet pleinement l'absurde calomnie dont Paul Rabaut fit justice et qui indigna l'Europe protestante. Calas a dénoncé son fils aux anciens :

Ceux-ci n'étaient autres, on le sait <sup>1</sup>, que les ministres dits du Saint-Evangile; et les chefs de la secte auraient pu ordonner, suivant les doctrines de l'ancienne loi, le supplice de cet infortuné.

L'ancienne loi, c'est l'Ancien Testament où les fils qui se révoltent contre l'autorité paternelle sont condamnés à mort, mais où, quoi qu'en semble dire l'auteur, il n'est nullement question d'étrangler ceux qui se font catholiques.

En parlant de la déclaration des pasteurs de Genève à propos de l'accusation ridicule portée contre Calvin, M. du Mége s'écrie encore : « On voit (c'est son expression habituelle quand il affirme le contraire de ce qu'on voit), on voit que la compagnie des pasteurs de Genève dissimulait ou semblait ignorer » ce que dit, dans son *Institution chrétienne*, cet hérésiarque.

Les Calas demeurent donc absous, sauf le père, coupable de dénonciation; ce sont les protestants en général, qu'on accuse, au milieu du dix-neuvième siècle, non dans un pamphlet jeté au hasard, mais dans un ouvrage en dix énormes volumes à deux colonnes, d'a-

1. On sait, au contraire, que les anciens sont toujours des laïques.

voir pour principe et pour habitude d'étrangler leurs fils en cas d'abjuration.

Cette opinion paraîtrait un peu hardie, sur le seul témoignage de M. du Mége, si l'auteur n'avait deux garants à citer, tous deux contemporains de Jean Calas et tous deux curieux à connaître. Le premier est M. l'abbé Magi<sup>1</sup>, de l'Académie des sciences de Toulouse et de celle des Jeux Floraux, « l'un des hommes les plus attachés à la philosophie du dix-huitième siècle, » qui aurait laissé, selon M. du Mége, une *Réponse inédite à une lettre écrite de Paris sur l'affaire des Calas*. Voici un passage de cette réponse, cité par M. du Mége avec pleine confiance :

Je lus à cette occasion, dans un livre fait par un auteur de cette secte, que leur Église a droit de vie et de mort sur les enfants qui veulent changer de religion malgré leurs pères.

D'où vient que M. l'abbé Magi soit le seul homme au monde qui ait jamais vu ce livre, et d'où vient qu'il ne le nomme pas, qu'il n'indique en aucune manière sous quel titre, par qui, en quel lieu, en quel temps, en quelle langue ce livre a été écrit? Nous ne pouvons qu'opposer à son assertion un démenti.

Ce même abbé suppose que Marc-Antoine sortit après le souper, ce que rien n'indique; on sait seulement qu'il descendit au rez-de-chaussée.

Comment rentra-t-il? qui le sait?... On le trouva pendu entre les deux vantaux de la porte, etc. Qui vous a dit qu'il ne fut pas surpris au passage par deux ou trois estafiers aux ordres du ministre du Saint-Evangile, et qu'après avoir fait le coup, ils ne disparurent pas dans les ténèbres?... Je le répète (ajoute l'abbé incrédule), toutes les sectes ont leur fiel et leurs crimes :

*Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.*

(La religion a enfanté des actes criminels et impies.)

Tout ceci prouverait seulement que l'abbé Magi était

1. Auteur de l'*Histoire et Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences de Toulouse*.

un très-mauvais catholique, qui se plaisait à attaquer toute religion, même celles dont il n'était pas ministre<sup>1</sup>.

On voit que le premier garant de M. du Mége est peu digne de foi. Le second, s'il a jamais existé, s'appelait le chevalier de Cazals. Nous copions le récit sans y rien changer :

Ce gentilhomme habitait une maison dans la rue des Filatiers (cette maison porte aujourd'hui le n° 45), vis-à-vis celle de Calas (c'est la maison marquée du n° 50): cette dernière, transformée presque en entier depuis peu d'années, conserve cependant sa porte en ogive mauresque qui annonce que sa construction remonte au quinzième siècle. Les demoiselles Calas occupaient une chambre dont les fenêtres s'ouvraient presque en face des fenêtres de M. de Cazals. J. Calas restait constamment, sauf à l'heure des repas, dans sa boutique ou dans le magasin situé en arrière. Quelques jeunes personnes du quartier se rassemblaient chez ses filles. M. de C... avait demandé et obtenu la faveur d'être admis dans cette société et peut-être même à l'insu de Calas. Un soir du mois d'octobre, la servante catholique vint avertir ses maîtresses, que leur père voulant recevoir quelques amis dans leur chambre, il les engageait à passer dans l'appartement de leur mère. On entendait les pas de ces personnes qui s'approchaient. M. de C... dut se blottir sous le lit<sup>2</sup>, tandis que les demoiselles Calas et leurs amies tremblantes furent dans l'appartement de madame Calas. C'est dans cette position que M. de C... aurait vaguement<sup>3</sup> entendu Calas parler de la prochaine conversion de son fils, et les résolutions fatales des personnes réunies dans cette chambre. Il aurait sans doute dû aussitôt prévenir M.-A. Calas. Mais comment croire à la persistance d'une aussi atroce résolution<sup>4</sup>? Lorsque le monitoire fut publié, il ne révéla point

1. M. Salvan (p. 5) nous apprend que Magi, quoiqu'on le qualifiât toujours du nom d'abbé, n'avait pris que le petit collet, n'était pas prêtre et finit par se marier. Il mourut en 1802 âgé de quatre-vingts ans, après avoir sauvé, pendant la Terreur, l'église de son village. Aussi M. Salvan doute-t-il de l'authenticité des paroles que du Mége lui attribue; nous ne demandons pas mieux. Mais alors quelle confiance mérite du Mége? Ou plutôt quelle apparence de valeur ont ces propos calomnieux dont on n'arrive jamais à saisir l'auteur responsable.

2. Pourquoi se cachait-il? Pourquoi tremblaient ces jeunes filles? Parce que, sans ces invraisemblances suspectes il n'y aurait pas d'histoire.

3. Vaguement! Qu'est-ce à dire? L'entendit-il, oui ou non?

4. Comment n'y pas croire, puisqu'il avait tout entendu? Voilà M. de Cazals complice d'un projet de meurtre qu'il n'a révélé ni à la justice ni à la victime.

d'une manière légale ce qu'il savait sur cette affaire <sup>1</sup>. Il en dit quelque chose à des amis intimes. Plus tard, ayant obtenu d'être relevé de l'excommunication qu'il avait encourue par son silence, il raconta ce qu'il avait entendu <sup>2</sup>, et dans Toulouse une partie de la haute société a toujours cru à la culpabilité de Calas. Madame de Montbel, qui ferme la liste des supérieures de Saint-Pantaléon, a raconté le fait relatif à M. de Cazals à plusieurs personnes et entre autres à M. l'abbé Barré, encore vivant. Cet ecclésiastique éclairé, qui a exercé les fonctions sacrées à l'île Bourbon, nous a même remis à ce sujet un écrit signé de lui, et qui a servi à la rédaction de ces lignes. »

Fut-il jamais un conte plus mal inventé? Oui, sans doute une partie de la haute société de Toulouse, y compris Mme de Montbel, supérieure de Saint-Pantaléon, n'a jamais admis l'innocence de Calas et a regretté sans cesse qu'il eût été impossible de trouver aucun vestige de l'assemblée secrète de protestants, dont il était question dans le monitoire. Ne voulant pas croire que Lagane et David de Beaudrigue se fussent permis d'insérer de pures suppositions parmi les chefs d'un monitoire, on ne s'est pas fait faute de se communiquer des conjectures également sans fondement, soit dans les conversations de la haute société toulousaine, soit dans celles de la communauté de Saint-Pantaléon, tant et si bien que, sous la dernière supérieure de cette maison, l'histoire s'est trouvée à point, avec tous ses détails incroyables, pour être confiée à M. l'abbé Barré dès son retour de l'île Bourbon. Ainsi appuyé, d'un côté sur un chevalier qui laissait étrangler les gens sans les prévenir, et de l'autre sur un abbé qui médissait de toute religion et lisait des livres que personne n'a écrits, du Mége conclut, « d'après plusieurs Mémoires inédits <sup>3</sup> et une tradition con-

1. Pourquoi se laisser excommunier lui-même après avoir laissé étrangler Marc-Antoine? Parce que toutes ces absurdités sont nécessaires au roman.

2. A qui? Personne n'en a jamais rien écrit avant M. du Mége.

3. Apparemment ceux des abbés Magi et Barré.

stante. » Sa conclusion, c'est que les motifs réels (de l'arrêt du Parlement) furent la conviction où était une notable portion des juges qu'un complot avait été tramé contre les jours de M.-A. Calas, que des assassins apostés l'avaient saisi au moment où il allait sortir, et cela par suite de la dénonciation du père, qu'on fit périr comme « ayant ordonné le crime et l'ayant laissé exécuter. »

Il ne faut pas raconter de pareils rêves à ceux qui ont lu les procédures et qui savent que, dans toute la double information, soit devant les Capitouls, soit au Parlement, dans le monitoire, dans les *briefs intendits*, dans les interrogatoires, dans les confrontations, l'hypothèse d'assassins venus du dehors est aussi absolument écartée que celle du suicide, tandis que tout, jusqu'à la fin, y tend à établir que Marc-Antoine fut étranglé par les cinq prévenus.

Il n'est pas étonnant, au point de vue où se place le continuateur de dom Vayssette, qu'il veuille bien reconnaître dans la procédure des erreurs ou des illégalités, ni qu'il admette l'innocence de quatre accusés sur cinq. Il arrive ainsi à ce double résultat, de prouver la justice irréprochable du Parlement (ce qui était à démontrer)<sup>1</sup>, et de faire peser le crime, non plus sur les Calas morts depuis longtemps (ce qui ne servirait pas à grand'chose), mais sur le protestantisme encore vivant (ce qui est beaucoup plus utile).

Du reste, s'il était besoin d'opposer une autre réfutation à de pareilles inepties, nous ajouterions que l'abbé Salvan, chanoine de Toulouse, ardent accusateur de Calas, *regarde ce récit comme une fable qui n'a aucun fondement*, et déclare avoir connu l'abbé Barré, mort de-

1. Il pense cependant que le Parlement a eu tort de juger sur des indices, puisqu'il y en avait pour et contre. On aurait dû renvoyer les accusés non absous, jusqu'à plus ample informé. Il approuve du reste la résistance de cette Cour souveraine à l'arrêt des maîtres des requêtes.



puis peu d'années et qui était un homme d'assez *peu de portée*. Ce jugement est significatif, même si l'on suppose qu'il n'est pas encore assez sévère.

Le nom de Voltaire, il faut l'avouer, a fini par nuire à la cause qu'il avait sauvée, et depuis la Révolution bien des esprits étroits auraient craint de passer pour complices de ses impiétés et de ses indécentes, s'ils n'avaient pris parti pour le clergé et le Parlement contre les Calas. En veut-on la preuve? L'abbé Salvan s'exprime ainsi, p. 125 du livre qu'il a écrit en réponse au nôtre : « Ce philosophe a fait beaucoup de mal : Calas, et bien des gens ont cru à la culpabilité du protestant de Toulouse, *uniquement* parce que Voltaire l'avait défendu, jusqu'à payer les frais du dernier procès. » M. Salvan est mieux placé que personne pour être bien informé à cet égard ; mais quelles aberrations du bon sens et du sens moral trahit un pareil état des esprits. Les journaux le *Correspondant* et l'*Univers* se sont empressés de donner l'hospitalité de leurs colonnes à un discours de rentrée de la conférence des avocats stagiaires, prononcé par un jeune avocat et docteur en droit. M. Huc, nommé, depuis, professeur suppléant à la Faculté de Toulouse. (Bibliographie n° 81.)

« Je veux, dit-il, essayer de réhabiliter le parlement de Toulouse et de le laver d'une injure qu'il ne mérita jamais... Il faut savoir s'il s'est rencontré un tribunal assez inique, pour envoyer *sciemment* un innocent à la mort, et plonger dans l'opprobre une famille entière. »

C'est, dès l'entrée, poser la question inexactement. Il faut n'avoir pas lu ce qu'écrivit Voltaire contre le Parlement pour ignorer qu'il reconnut la bonne foi de juges et ne les accusa point d'avoir commis *sciemment* l'horrible injustice qu'il leur reprochait (voir p. 236 note 1). D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas au point de vue de l'*injure*, méritée ou non, du Parlement qu'il convient de se placer ; ce n'est pas ainsi que doit être traitée un

question judiciaire. Le discours de M. Huc n'est guère que le chapitre de M. Mary-Lafon réduit en plaidoyer. M. Huc plaide en avocat qui n'a pas eu le temps de lire son dossier. Non-seulement il ne sait rien des faits qui ont été prouvés dans l'enquête parisienne, et donne par exemple comme digne de foi le faux témoin Catherine Daumier; mais ce qui est prodigieux, il ignore la défense et ne paraît pas avoir lu un seul des six Mémoires publiés par l'avocat Sudre, le conseiller La Salle, l'accusé Lavaysse et son père. De plus, il connaît très-imparfaitement la procédure elle-même<sup>1</sup>; sauf quelques points en général secondaires, il n'a bien étudié que les briefs entendits du 7 novembre contre Calas père et fils. Il répète que Voltaire a inventé la mélancolie de Marc-Antoine. Il affirme du ton le plus tranchant que « Marc-Antoine n'avait aucun motif, même frivole, pour se détruire. » Quand cela serait vrai, les suicides inexplicables et qui ont pour origine une mélancolie moins morale que physique ne sont pas rares. Mais n'est-ce pas un motif de chagrin, est-ce même un motif frivole, que d'avoir dû renoncer pour toute sa vie à la profession pour laquelle il avait étudié, où il croyait réussir, et de se voir dans l'impossibilité d'en embrasser aucune autre?

« Lavaysse ne dit pas être remonté auprès de Mme Calas. »

Il le dit positivement.

« Jamais Lavaysse ne s'expliqua sur cette sortie mystérieuse, suivie d'une rentrée presque immédiate. »

1. « Il ne reste rien, dit-il, de celle du Parlement, qui devait être plus concluante que l'autre, puisqu'elle fut la principale cause de la condamnation. » Ceci est complètement inexact. Cette procédure existe à Paris et à Toulouse même. M. Huc oublie que le Parlement maintint et fit continuer l'*inquisition* commencée. M. Huc lui-même l'a parcourue, discutée, citée en double exemplaire sans se rendre bien compte de ce qu'il avait sous les yeux. Et la condamnation n'a été motivée par rien de plus concluant.

Ceci est tellement inexact que M. Huc reproduit même plus loin cette explication, qui est très-simple :

« On comprend pourquoi Lavaysse venu à Toulouse, le 12 octobre, sans qu'il puisse donner un motif à son voyage, était tellement pressé de repartir. »

Si jamais il y eut un voyage clairement et amplement motivé, ce fut celui de Lavaysse; et il est très-naturel qu'il fût pressé, non de *repartir*, mais de continuer son voyage jusque chez ses parents qu'il allait voir avant de quitter l'Europe.

Nous avons entendu les accusés répondre qu'il n'y avait ni nombre d'escabeaux et de chaises, dans la boutique et dans le magasin (ce qu'il était facile de vérifier) : M. Huc n'a pas lu leur déclaration ou l'a oubliée.

Impossible, selon lui, que Marc-Antoine se soit perdu sans lumière. Pourquoi? Et qui lui prouve que dans ce magasin si mal examiné il n'y avait pas une chandelle éteinte ou renversée? Est-il certain que la fenêtre ou la porte *ouverte* de l'arrière-boutique ne donnât pas assez de jour à huit heures, le 13 octobre?

Nous avons raconté l'épisode des lettres de Carrière sur lesquelles le jeune écrivain bâtit tout un échafaudage de suppositions, parce qu'il ignore que ces lettres sont de l'avocat.

Du reste, il n'adopte point et ne paraît pas connaître le système de du Mége. Avec lui comme avec M. Mar Lafon, l'on en revient simplement aux dires de l'accusation. Mais nous sommes heureux de constater qu'un jurisconsulte a étudié ce dossier avec le parti pris de *laver le parlement* de Toulouse et n'y a pas trouvé un argument solide. Nous n'avons plus, pour faire justice de son travail, qu'à montrer où il aboutit, prouver une fois de plus que de fausses prémisses et une logique impitoyable peuvent mener bien loin :

On est seulement surpris d'une chose, c'est de l'hésitation.

juges qui, ayant condamné Calas père à la roue, relaxent les autres accusés.

C'est cependant en s'appuyant sur l'argumentation si imparfaite de M. Huc que le journal de l'ultra-catholicisme se laisse emporter aux plus virulentes invectives contre le martyr protestant et contre le philosophe qui fit rendre à sa sainte mémoire une justice aussi éclatante, hélas ! que tardive.

« La France entière et toute l'Europe se passionnèrent pour ce scélérat, et Voltaire triompha de la justice humaine... » Et plus loin : « C'est là le vrai triomphe de Voltaire, en effet, plus sérieux que l'apothéose ridicule de Paris. En réhabilitant Calas, Voltaire foule sous ses pieds la magistrature, la justice, la vérité et la religion. Il connaissait toute la portée de ce triomphe, et rien ne lui fut plus sensible. » (*Univers* du 19 novembre 1857.)

Nous croirions fort inutile de citer ici le *Guide dans Toulouse*, Bibliogr., n° 84, publié en 1858 par M. Le Blanc du Vernet<sup>1</sup>, si nous n'y trouvions indiquée une série alors nouvelle de documents, dont nous avons fait usage et que l'on annonce comme dangereux pour les Calas.

Selon ce *Guide*, la correspondance de M. de Saint-Priest avec le subdélégué Amblard met en lumière, entre autres choses, deux faits qui sembleraient bien prouver la culpabilité des Calas : 1° les rigueurs du père envers Louis ; 2° l'arrivée à Toulouse, le jour même et le lendemain de la mort de Marc-Antoine, d'un grand nombre de protestants. Encore cette accusation, si complètement ridicule, qu'un écrivain qui ne serait pas aveuglé par de petites passions de localité et de secte se garderait de la signer de son nom ! Il est évident que M. Le Blanc n'a pas lu

1. Cet écrivain s'est fait connaître par d'autres publications. Il a fait paraître, sous le nom de Frédéric Le Blanc et de concert avec M. Henri Imbert, une brochure, dédiée au Pape régnant, en faveur de la *Peine de mort dans les sociétés modernes* ; Paris, 172 p. in-8°. — Sous un troisième nom, celui de Fréd. Le Blanc d'Hackluya, le même auteur a inséré nombre d'articles dans le *Corsaire* et a écrit, en un volume in-12, l'*Histoire de l'Islamisme et des sectes qui s'y rattachent*.

les lettres ; il en parle, on le voit, d'après ce qu'on en dit à Toulouse.

Nous avons déjà examiné ce qu'il y a de vrai dans première de ces deux accusations<sup>1</sup>. Il suffit d'ajouter que dans les lettres en question il n'y a *rien, absolument rien*, qui incrimine la conduite de Calas à l'égard Louis. Nous publions cinq de ces lettres en entier, les copies des autres sont dans nos mains<sup>2</sup>; nous clarons qu'elles ne contiennent *ni un renseignement quelconque, ni même une allusion* à Louis Calas et à la conduite de ses parents envers lui.

Quant à la seconde imputation, M. de Saint-Priest même en doutait<sup>3</sup>: *On prétend*, dit-il, *mais on n'assure pas....*

Admettons cependant le fait : nous demanderons M. Le Blanc si le lendemain d'un meurtre on voit conseillers ou les auteurs du crime, non pas fuir, mais au contraire se réunir *en grand nombre* et sans aucun intérêt, au lieu où ils l'ont fait commettre. Il n'est nullement impossible que les protestants des environs Toulouse y soient venus le 13 ou le 14 *en grand nombre* pour célébrer le service divin dans quelque endroit convenu, en dehors de la ville, comme cela avait lieu alors, les jours de semaine aussi bien que le dimanche, quand on le pouvait. Mais s'ils eussent prévu moins du monde les ridicules et affreux soupçons dont ils allaient être les victimes, ils se seraient gardés de se montrer. Quel sens, quel but, peut avoir cette arrivée des protestants, non la veille, mais le lendemain

1. P. 60 et suiv.

2. Pièces justif., I, VII, VIII, XVII, XIX.

3. Voir Pièces justif. VI. Il en doutait, malgré l'assertion d'Amblanc à laquelle M. Le Blanc peut joindre la déposition de la demoiselle Reine épouse de Dubarry : « Ce témoin a *entendu* dire au sieur Delpech fils cadet, que le jour de la mort de Marc-Antoine on avait vu entrer chez le sieur Calas beaucoup de huguenots, ce qui avait fait présumer qu'il y avait eu espèce d'assemblée. »

de la mort de Marc-Antoine? Est-il permis de dire que de pareilles choses *semblent bien* prouver la culpabilité des Calas?

Après M. Huc, et dans le même sens, la question a été reprise par M. le vicomte de Bastard d'Estang, conseiller à la cour impériale de Paris, dans un ouvrage intitulé : *Les Parlements de France*<sup>1</sup>. L'auteur descend d'une famille qui a donné au parlement de Toulouse plusieurs présidents, et quoique ses ancêtres n'aient point eu à se prononcer dans l'affaire des Calas, il épouse les passions de leurs adversaires. Il n'a fait du procès qu'une étude très-superficielle. Comme M. Huc, il nie l'humeur sombre de Marc-Antoine, attestée par le monitoire même et par des témoignages très-précis ; il ne sait pas quel motif Marc-Antoine a pu avoir de détester la vie. Il affirme, sans en donner l'ombre d'une preuve, que Marc-Antoine voulait se faire catholique, et que le public, tout le clergé, Jean Calas enfin, le savaient. Il accuse sans aucun motif l'abbé Laplaigne de tromper les juges en niant d'avoir confessé Marc-Antoine. Il imagine que Voltaire, en soulevant l'opinion, n'avait d'autre source d'informations que le *Mémoire* de Donat Calas *établi à Nismes*. Or Donat était à Genève, n'était point un homme établi, car il avait quinze ans et les deux pièces publiées sous son nom, loin d'avoir pu servir de base à tous les écrits de Voltaire, ont pour auteur Voltaire lui-même. Partial contre les Calas et leurs défenseurs, M. de Bastard ne l'est pas moins pour leurs adversaires. Il dit du président de Senaux dont on peut lire ici même (Pièces justif. XX), une lettre : *ce grand magistrat* (*id.*, p. 461). Il déclare que « la Tournelle était alors composée des magistrats les plus recommandables du Parlement (p. 403). » Qu'étaient donc les autres? —

1. *Bibliogr.*, n° 85. Quoique daté de 1857, cet ouvrage, annoncé dans la première édition du nôtre, n'a été mis en vente qu'après celui-ci, qui, suivant l'usage, a paru en novembre 1857 avec la date de 1858.

Il rêve que leurs arrêts furent rendus à l'unanimité (*id.*, p. 406) contre Jean Calas, et ensuite à l'égard de autres accusés, ce qui est doublement inexact; et qui, sauf Loyseau de Mauléon, « nul avocat des Calas, ni écrivain philosophe, pas même Voltaire, » ne révèle cette circonstance que les avis des juges furent partagés. Preuve surabondante, que M. de Bastard n'a lu ce dont il parle. Il prend pour sérieuses et valables les plus folles rêveries de M. du Mége, l'historiette dicule du chevalier de Cazals, l'assertion que le jugement définitif fut prononcé par une *commission* et savoir la procédure, tous faits dont la fausseté est montrée<sup>1</sup>. Pour prouver que le monitoire n'a pu passionner les témoins ou les égarer, M. de Bastard permet une remarque « qu'il n'a trouvée nulle part dit-il; et qui répond victorieusement au reproche *fanatisme*, etc.; c'est que la principale instruction, plus considérable, celle qui contient presque toutes les charges contre les accusés, est du 14 octobre, tandis que le monitoire ne fut lu que le 17. » Cette remarque est absolument contraire à la vérité. Les Capitouls entendirent quatre-vingt-sept témoins, douze seulement le 14, dix le 16, et tous les autres après le Monitoire publié; à ces soixante-cinq témoignages nouveaux, il faut joindre trente *révélations sur monitoire*, une multitude de confrontations avec les accusés, et enfin toute l'instruction faite par le Parlement. Or on sait qu'aucun témoin dans cette affaire n'ayant rien vu, l'accusation s'appuya sur le nombre de ceux qui savaient quelque chose « par oui-dire ou autrement. » L'influence, du monitoire sur les déposants est d'une éclatante évidence, et nul, avant M. de Bastard, n'avait songé à un argument si manifestement faux.

1. Quant à la procédure qui passa sous les yeux des derniers juges elle se composait de 247 pièces.

Nous ne pousserons pas plus loin cet examen inutile. M. de Bastard, qui sur la foi de du Mége accuse inexactement les maîtres des requêtes d'avoir jugé l'affaire sans étudier la procédure, a eu précisément le tort qu'il leur prête.

Si nous laissions croire que tous les habitants de Toulouse, même catholiques, admettent de si absurdes préjugés, nous leur ferions grand tort; et comme nous n'avons pas le moindre désir de jeter aucune défaveur dans l'opinion, sur une ville qui a brillé d'un si grand éclat dans l'histoire, nous nous empressons d'enregistrer en faveur des Calas, et à Toulouse même, des jugements tout opposés. Ces jugements sont d'autant plus honorables que l'on y possède uniquement les pièces de la double instruction, entachée de tant de partialité, commencée par les Capitouls et achevée par le Parlement, sans une seule des pièces nouvelles et toutes favorables qui furent produites devant les maîtres des requêtes. Quelques esprits équitables en ont vu assez pour conclure à l'entière innocence des Calas. Ce fut le cas de M. d'Aldéguier<sup>1</sup>, archiviste et historien de la ville de Toulouse, mais qui malheureusement ne s'est pas acquis le renom d'une science assez précise et d'un jugement assez calme. Ce fut aussi le résultat des recherches d'un éminent magistrat, M. Plougoulm, qui fut procureur général dans la même ville et qui fit l'examen le plus consciencieux de la procédure qu'il y trouva. Il a rendu à l'innocence des Calas un magnifique témoignage<sup>2</sup> :

« J'ai tenu dans mes mains, j'ai lu de mes yeux, depuis la première jusqu'à la dernière ligne, cette triste et douloureuse procédure, et comprimant l'émotion qui me gagnait à chaque moment, quand j'entendais ce père, cette mère s'écrier pour toute

1. *Bibliographie*, n° 76.

2. Discours de rentrée à la Cour impériale de Rennes, 3 novembre 1843 (Sur les progrès de la législation pénale en France).



défense devant leur impitoyable juge : « Croyez-vous donc qu'on puisse tuer son enfant ! » j'ai tout examiné, tout pesé comme si j'eusse eu à parler moi-même. Que je serais heureux, si ce que je vais dire pouvait ajouter encore un rayon d'évidence à une vérité, à une innocence depuis si longtemps reconnues ! Oui, Messieurs, j'aime à le proclamer, dans toutes ces pièces, dans tous ces témoignages, ces monitoires, je n'ai rien découvert, pas un fait, pas un mot, pas l'ombre d'une preuve, d'un indice, qui explique cette épouvantable erreur ; reste le fanatisme qui explique tout, il est vrai ; mais admirez ici comme la vérité se fait jour et saisissons le moment où l'humanité se réveille. Tandis que la justice humaine, égarée comme la foule qui se presse autour d'elle, conduit sa victime au supplice, le malheureux vieillard passant devant la maison où il avait vécu tant d'heureuses années au sein de sa famille, demande à s'agenouiller et à bénir sa demeure ! Simple et déchirante action, qui renfermait à elle seule une si grande lumière d'innocence qu'elle émut profondément la multitude. Dès ce moment, m'a-t-on affirmé dans le pays qui produit cet horrible drame, les yeux se dessillèrent. Hélas ! Messieurs, il était trop tard ; le vieillard continua sa route, et à quelques pas de là, il expirait sur la roue, répétant à celui qui le pressait d'avouer son crime : « Et vous aussi, vous croyez qu'on peut tuer son enfant ! »

C'est un fait considérable que cette déclaration éloquentes d'un successeur de Bonrepos, reprenant de sang-froid l'examen juridique dont son prédécesseur s'était si mal acquitté, sous le violent empire de la passion. Seulement, en notre qualité de narrateur scrupuleux, nous sommes forcé de révoquer en doute l'anecdote touchante de Jean Calas bénissant sa maison à genoux dans la charrette du bourreau. Nous n'en avons trouvé aucune trace contemporaine. Il nous semble difficile que ce vieillard, brisé par la question ordinaire et extraordinaire, ait eu encore la force de s'agenouiller seul, ou se soit fait agenouiller par l'exécuteur comme il dut le faire quelques moments plus tard pour l'amende honorable. Nous ne croyons pas non plus que David, qui dirigeait tout, lui eût montré cette complaisance. Enfin, soit que le condamné partît des prisons du palais, ou, ce qui est plus probable, qu'il sortît de

celle de l'hôtel de ville, où les condamnés à mort devaient attendre leur supplice, la rue des Filatiers ne se trouve ni dans la direction de la cathédrale de Saint-Etienne où se fit l'amende honorable, ni dans celle de la place Saint-Georges, lieu de l'exécution. D'autres rues, bien plus directes et plus larges, ont dû être suivies par le cortège funèbre<sup>1</sup>. Reconnaissons la légende, non plus hostile et dictée par la haine, mais inspirée au contraire par la vénération et la pitié, devenue une tradition locale, et mise en œuvre par un orateur ému et puissant, qui l'a crue vraie.

Il doit m'être permis, enfin, de citer au nombre des écrits où l'affaire des Calas a été traitée d'une façon nouvelle, l'*Histoire des Églises du Désert*, sur laquelle un jugement remarquable a été porté par un des savants de l'Allemagne qui connaissent le mieux l'histoire des protestants de France. M. de Polenz déclare le récit que Charles Coquerel a donné de l'affaire Calas supérieur à tous les récits antérieurs<sup>2</sup>. Il est de fait que l'auteur, ayant sous les yeux la correspondance de Paul Rabaut et d'autres pasteurs du Désert, ayant de plus des documents qui provenaient de Mme Duvoisin, a jeté un jour nouveau sur plusieurs points du procès.

Ces mêmes documents ont dû servir de point de départ à nos recherches, aucun autre écrivain n'ayant fait avant nous un examen approfondi de l'affaire, examen devenu évidemment indispensable depuis les attaques de MM. Mary-Lafon, du Mége et Iluc, qui étaient demeurées sans réponse.

1. On lit d'ailleurs, dans le procès-verbal de l'exécution, que Jean Calas a été conduit par le cours accoutumé (Voir plus haut, p. 198).

2. Unter den Bearbeitungen steht Coquerels *Histoire des Églises du Désert* (t. 2, p. 304-341) unbedingt obenan. (Article CALAS dans la *Real-Encyclopædie de Herzog*.) M. de Polenz publie une *Histoire du Calvinisme français jusqu'à l'Assemblée nationale* de 1789, dont cinq volumes in-8° ont paru.

## II. 1858-1869.

L'ouvrage qu'on vient de lire parut à la fin de 1858. Bientôt le bruit se répandit à Toulouse qu'il allait être réfuté; qu'un chanoine de la métropole, descendant d'un des juges de Calas, et aidé d'un magistrat savant, allait prendre en main la cause de ses ancêtres, de sa ville natale, du clergé et du Parlement. M. l'abbé Salvat lui-même annonça le travail qu'il préparait (*Histoire de l'église de Toulouse*), t. IV, p. 444 et 445<sup>1</sup>.

Nous attendions avec quelque impatience cette réponse. Si les divers titres de l'auteur ne garantissaient guère une étude très-impartiale, au moins pouvait-on être sûr qu'il serait bien placé pour ne rien laisser échapper de tout ce qu'il était possible de dire en faveur de ses clients et contre les nôtres.

Ce fut seulement après plusieurs années, en 1863, qu'il parut l'*Histoire du procès de Jean Calas à Toulouse, d'après procédure authentique et la correspondance administrative* par M. l'abbé Salvan, chanoine honoraire de Toulouse (Voir la Biographie, n° 89.)

Dans sa préface, l'auteur déclare que la lecture attentive de notre ouvrage l'a déterminé à composer le sien et que dans ce but, il a dû s'aider de tous les secours possibles (p. iii).

On remarquera dès l'abord ce titre significatif : *Procès de Jean Calas à Toulouse*. Il indique que l'auteur se contente de l'information faite par les Capitouls et le Parlement.

1. Il indique dans cet ouvrage les résultats de ses recherches et déclare que si, comme il le pense, Calas a étranglé Marc-Antoine, la région est étrangère à cette mort. La dureté, la ténacité et l'avarice de cet homme n'expliqueraient que trop l'excès auquel il a pu se livrer. C'est-il sérieux? Assassiner son propre fils, est-ce donc se livrer à un si grand excès? Suffit-il qu'un homme soit dur, tenace et avare pour être meurtrier, et le meurtrier de son enfant? Ces défauts imaginaires de Calas, loin d'expliquer trop, n'expliqueraient nullement un si grand crime.

lement (laquelle, après audition de plus de quatre-vingts témoins à charge et d'un seul à décharge, aboutit à la condamnation) et n'a pas cru devoir étudier ou faire étudier à Paris la nouvelle procédure qui a complété et rectifié la première sur une foule de points et abouti à la cassation du premier arrêt. M. Salvan est donc un juge qui n'a vu que la moitié du dossier, ou qui n'a entendu que le réquisitoire du ministère public, sans écouter la défense.

Ce livre est remarquable en ceci, que l'accusation s'y trouve réduite à renoncer à la plupart de ses vieilles armes. M. Salvan jette par-dessus le bord : 1° l'abbé de Contezat avec la *calomnie* aussi niaise qu'atroce qu'il osa publier contre tous les protestants, depuis Luther et Calvin ; 2° le chevalier de Cazals et son roman indécent, répété par Mme la supérieure de Saint-Pantaléon et par l'abbé Barré ; 3° l'abbé Magi ou du moins les assertions inadmissibles qu'on lui a prêtées. Il admet comme réels des faits qu'on avait niés à tort, tels que la mélancolie de Marc-Antoine, le souper du 13 octobre, etc.

On voit que l'accusation vaincue cède peu à peu le terrain, se renferme dans des limites toujours plus étroites et défend pied à pied, avec une obstination infatigable, ses derniers et très-faibles retranchements.

Les erreurs que nous reproche le chanoine sont sévèrement qualifiées par lui ; nous en avons compté jusqu'à trois :

Nous avons dit qu'une place publique était voisine de la maison des Calas ; il se trouve que cette place a été ouverte plus récemment ; *erreur grave* (p. 88). Nous avons dit que quand on ramassa la *bille* et la corde, quelques cheveux de Marc-Antoine adhéraient encore à la *bille* ; M. Salvan déclare que c'était à la corde ; peut-être, mais la corde et la *bille* furent trouvées ensemble ; c'est une autre *erreur grave* (p. 89). Enfin, nous avons dit que l'abbé Magi fut un mauvais prêtre, tandis que

M. Magi, quoiqu'on le qualifiât toujours du nom d'abbé, n'était pas prêtre; *bien grave erreur* (p. v).

Les sources auxquelles notre adversaire a puisé sont de celles qui nous ont servi. Nous avons compulsé avant lui la procédure conservée à Toulouse et un de nos amis, M. le professeur Benoît, avait fait pour nous des extraits de la correspondance de M. de Saint-Priest avec Amblard. Nous pourrions même engager M. Salvan à copier moins négligemment des documents semblables et à ne pas imprimer, comme il l'a fait page 12: *pour la maison*, tandis que l'original porte *pour le moins*<sup>1</sup>. Ce qui résulte de cette correspondance c'est surtout que, selon Amblard, Calas était *fort riche* et *fort dur* à l'égard de Louis. Nous croyons avoir prouvé (p. 66 et 89) que la seconde assertion est injuste, et quant à la première on a vu (p. 65 et 289) Amblard lui-même, mieux instruit, la démentir entièrement dans la suite de cette même correspondance (p. 165 et 267).

La méthode de l'abbé consiste à écrire de petits chapitres courts où il énumère, sous divers chefs, les assertions des témoins favorables à sa cause. Ces chapitres ont parfois des titres où la partialité éclate, comme ch. XIII: *Terrible présomption contre Jean Calas*. Or, ce titre est tout ce qu'il y a de terrible dans le chapitre. D'autres fois les chapitres finissent par des conclusions péremptoires qui ne ressortent nullement des faibles arguments qui les ont précédées. En voici un exemple: Après avoir cité les témoins au sujet des discussions entre Louis et sa famille, M. Salvan les résume ainsi:

« Il résulte de ces dépositions diverses que le projet d'abjuration de Louis Calas lui suscita des vexations dans sa famille; qu'il reçut plusieurs menaces, et qu'infailiblement, s'il fût demeuré dans la maison paternelle, on lui eût fait un mauvais parti (p. 19). »

1. Hâtons-nous d'expliquer que cette erreur de copiste est involontaire et nuit, plutôt qu'elle ne sert, à la cause que M. Salvan veut soutenir.

*Infailiblement* n'est-il pas merveilleux ? Voilà donc les Calas accusés en 1863, non-seulement d'avoir étranglé un de leurs fils, mais d'avoir été tout prêts à en étrangler un second !

Autre fin de chapitre, d'un genre différent :

« Si on ne peut rigoureusement conclure de tous ces faits l'existence d'un vrai complot contre la vie de Marc-Antoine est-il (pour *il est*) du moins certain qu'ils font naître des soupçons difficiles à détruire et projettent sur l'événement une ombre que l'on a peine à dissiper (p. 40). »

Ces paroles trahissent tout le procédé de M. Salvan. Il s'évertue sans cesse à épiloguer sur des apparences presque imperceptibles de désaccord entre les réponses des cinq accusés, dans leurs longs et interminables interrogatoires. A la moindre erreur de mémoire, bien excusable au sein de la douleur paternelle la plus poignante et la plus imprévue : « Calas a menti encore une fois, s'écrie son nouvel accusateur, et ces contradictions et ces mensonges rendent jusqu'ici très-probable sa culpabilité (p. 61). » Encore si l'on appliquait la même mesure aux dépositions des témoins hostiles ! Mais il n'en est rien ; M. Salvan ne voit pas chez eux les contradictions les plus palpables, des impossibilités évidentes, tandis qu'il s'acharne à surprendre chez les accusés quelque trace de trouble ou d'hésitation. M. le chanoine ressemble au Jupiter d'Homère : c'est un assembleur de nuages. Mais qui croit-il convaincre avec de si pauvres vétilles, quand il s'agit de montrer un vieillard parfaitement honorable étranglant son fils avec l'aide de la mère, d'un frère, d'un ami et d'une dévote catholique, le tout en haine du catholicisme ?

M. Salvan ne recule pas devant l'absurdité tant signalée de la complicité d'une dévote catholique dans ce prétendu crime protestant. Viguière a été accusée d'avoir prévenu Marc-Antoine, avant le souper « de ne pas monter, et que s'il montait, il lui arriverait mal-

heur. » M. Salvan ajoute : *elle a nié ces propos, mais sa négation n'en infirme pas la vérité* (p. 44). Ceci n'est-il pas du plus pur arbitraire? Voilà donc, suivant l'abbé, cette exacte catholique, qui n'a cessé de se confesser et de communier jusqu'à quatre-vingt-dix ans, qui avait converti Louis, qui a fait dire cent francs de messes pour le repos de son âme, accusée d'avoir su qu'on voulait assassiner Marc-Antoine pour l'empêcher de devenir catholique, et après un avertissement inutile, d'avoir tranquillement laissé commettre ce forfait ou même d'y avoir participé! Tout cela parce que, dans un de ses interrogatoires, le juge lui a reproché une parole qu'on lui a prêtée, qu'elle n'a jamais cessé de déclarer fausse et qui est d'ailleurs absolument incroyable. En effet, si elle l'a averti, pourquoi l'a-t-elle étranglé ou laissé étrangler; et si elle consentait à son supplice, pourquoi l'a-t-elle prévenu?

M. Salvan annonce que la procédure dévoile *un fait bien plus extraordinaire encore* (p. 36); ce fait c'est que « Cazeing avait passé le 13 par Auterive à crève-cheval » et avait dit « qu'il se rendait à Toulouse pour finir une affaire à laquelle il ne serait peut-être pas à temps. » Voilà tout; ce fait, attesté par le témoin Darquier père prouve une seule chose : que le fabricant Cazeing avait, très-probablement pour son commerce, une affaire à terminer le 13 à Toulouse. Mais il convient à M. l'abbé Salvan 1° de *penser qu'il y a erreur de date*, et que c'est le 12 qu'a eu lieu le retour de Cazeing; 2° de supposer que Cazeing venait de Saverdun : or, « personne n'ignore que Saverdun était à cette époque le boulevard du protestantisme dans le midi. » Pardon; nous l'ignorons si bien que nous nommerions Nîmes, Castres, et beaucoup d'autres lieux comme boulevards du protestantisme méridional de cette époque, bien avant Saverdun. Mais quand Saverdun eût été ce *boulevard*, quand il serait prouvé que Cazeing en venait, non pas le 13 où on l'a

**v**u passer, mais le 12, date supposée par M. Salvan; que **p**ourrait-on conclure de tout cela? M. Salvan en tire **c**ette conséquence que Cazeing revenait avec l'ordre **d**e faire mourir Marc-Antoine, ordre donné on ne dit **p**as par qui. Il ajoute :

« Nous voulons bien accorder à messieurs de la religion prétendue réformée<sup>1</sup> qu'il n'existe ni dans la doctrine des chefs de la réforme, ni dans aucun concile ou synode protestant, un article qui permette ou prescrive **d**irectement le meurtre et l'assassinat pour empêcher le changement de religion. (C'est grand honneur, monsieur le chanoine, que vous daigniez nous faire; ni l'**E**urope, ni l'Amérique protestantes ne sauraient vous **ê**tre trop reconnaissantes!) Mais il faut qu'ils nous accordent que le fanatisme religieux est capable de produire les plus horribles excès (p. 37.) » — Accordé, non-seulement à M. Salvan, mais au parlement de Toulouse, à ses capitouls et à tous leurs défenseurs. Seulement, nous sera-t-il permis de demander comment cette banale généralité, à propos d'un négociant pressé qui court à ses affaires, prouve qu'il avait reçu dans Saverdun, prétendu boulevard du protestantisme, l'ordre d'étrangler Marc-Antoine Calas?

Après cette puissante démonstration, M. l'abbé rappelle que Jésus-Christ a dit : « Le temps viendra où quiconque vous tuera croira se rendre agréable à Dieu. » Puis, persuadé que ce *vous* s'applique clairement à Marc-Antoine, et que Cazeing ou Jean Calas peuvent seuls être désignés par *quiconque*, l'abbé triomphant, s'écrie : *poursuivons!* et il passe à une autre argumentation tout aussi concluante.

En effet, Lavaysse ayant déclaré que l'invitation à

1. Pardon, monsieur l'abbé; votre langage n'est pas de notre siècle; vous vous croyez au bon temps de Louis XIV. Il n'y a plus de religion prétendue réformée; il y a, d'après les lois de l'État, depuis 1802, une *église réformée de France*; soyez poli, quoique parlant à des protestants.



souper lui fut faite non-seulement par Calas père, mais par ses fils, M. Salvan trouve dans ce détail la preuve que Marc-Antoine a été assassiné. « Voilà, s'écrie-t-il; Marc-Antoine qui doit se suicider le soir même et qui, pour régaler son hôte, l'invite à être témoin de son suicide! A qui persuadera-t-on de semblables choses? Et c'est cependant ce qu'il faut admettre si Marc-Antoine s'est donné la mort (p. 38). »

Il ne faut rien admettre de pareil. Le fils aîné de M. Calas ne pouvait guère se dispenser de cette simple politesse; il a dû très-naturellement, presque machinalement peut-être, joindre ses instances à celles de son père et son frère, sans être résolu pour cela à régaler son ami d'un suicide. Nous ferons remarquer à M. le chanoine que Marc-Antoine ne doit pas absolument se tuer ce soir-là, que rien ne l'y oblige, qu'il le fait librement; nous ajouterons que si le dégoût de la vie pousse un homme à commettre ce crime, et un fils à plonger ses parents dans un deuil si douloureux, on n'a pas le droit d'affirmer qu'il en sera empêché par l'inconvenance d'affliger un visiteur de sa famille.

L'accusation a changé de front : M. Salvan ne fait plus de Calas un fanatique, mais un mauvais père et un spéculateur d'une espèce étrange. Selon lui (p. 42) « ce que redoutait Jean Calas n'était pas précisément le changement de religion de Marc-Antoine, mais les conséquences de ce changement qui devait rendre plus actives les exigences du fils. » En d'autres termes, selon notre auteur, ce qui a déterminé le père à assassiner son fils, c'est la peur d'avoir à lui payer une pension comme à Louis. Les protestants ne commettent plus de parricides par fanatisme, mais par économie. Voilà à quelles pitoyables inventions en sont réduits les modernes défenseurs du parlement de Toulouse!

Voici encore un échantillon des nouveaux arguments qu'on veut mettre en lumière aujourd'hui. C'est une

déposition que M. Salvan déclare *écrasante* : « Sans-Estellé dépose que le 13, se trouvant avec Pierre Calas dans le magasin, non loin du cadavre de son frère, Pierre lui dit que Marc-Antoine, avant de descendre, avait pris la clef du magasin (p. 50). » Qu'y a-t-il d'étonnant à ce que Marc-Antoine, qu'on trouva dans le magasin, en eût pris la clef pour y entrer ? — Pourquoi y allait-il ? s'écrie M. Salvan. — Apparemment pour s'y pendre, puisqu'on l'y a trouvé pendu. — Mais là-dessus la vive imagination de notre auteur se plaît à supposer, sans ombre de fondement, que le père, sous quelque prétexte de règlement des comptes de la journée, avait envoyé son fils l'attendre au magasin, afin de l'y étrangler. En vérité, on ne sait plus comment réfuter de pareilles folies.

A supposer que *Sans-Estellé* ait dit vrai et que Pierre, près du cadavre de son frère, ait songé à communiquer au témoin un si mince détail, qu'y aurait-il eu d'étonnant à ce que le fils aîné d'un commerçant prît la clef d'un magasin où il était employé ? Cela devait arriver souvent. Il pouvait avoir quelque objet à y prendre, quelque arrangement à y terminer, mille raisons insignifiantes et journalières d'y entrer. Voilà cependant ce que M. le chanoine de Toulouse dit *écrasant* pour les Calas.

Autre argument nouveau, que nous éprouvons quelque embarras à reproduire. Les accusés ont toujours dit qu'ils ne s'étaient pas séparés, le jour du suicide, depuis le commencement du repas jusqu'au départ de Lavaysse, vers dix heures. Pressé de questions minutieuses à ce sujet, Calas déclara un jour, dans un interrogatoire, qu'il avait été obligé dans la soirée de descendre, pour un instant seulement, à un endroit qu'il désigna et qu'on devine aisément. M. Salvan croit avoir découvert, dans une circonstance si insignifiante, la trace du crime ; et cela, par cette étrange raison que,

selon lui, Calas fut absent, d'après sa propre déclaration, trop peu de temps « pour satisfaire aux besoins de la nature qui en réclament même le moins (p. 74). Qu'en savez-vous, monsieur l'abbé? et pourquoi aimez-vous mieux penser qu'il était allé étrangler son frère, opération évidemment plus longue, plus exceptionnelle, plus difficile à exécuter et à nous faire admettre?

Quant aux contradictions flagrantes contenues dans ce livre, elles abondent. Tantôt M. Salvan, qui ne veut point passer pour un ignorant fanatique, daigne convenir que le protestantisme ne prescrit pas l'assassinat des convertis au catholicisme; tantôt il fait revenir Zeing à bride abattue de Saverdun, boulevard du protestantisme, où l'assassinat du converti vient d'être commis, et où l'on ne sait par qui.

M. Salvan termine son chapitre v, par ces mots : « Nous concluons, après avoir pesé sérieusement la valeur de ces témoignages, que l'abjuration de Marc-Antoine était tout au moins en état de projet et qu'elle était pressentie par sa famille. » Cependant il conclut d'une façon tout opposée, dans l'avant-dernière page de son livre : « Nous n'avons jamais cru au projet qu'aurait eu Marc-Antoine d'abjurer sa religion. »

Il aurait mieux fait de ne publier son ouvrage qu'après s'être mis d'accord avec lui-même<sup>1</sup>.

En dernière analyse, que ressort-il de la tentative impuissante des derniers accusateurs de Calas? Que l'accusation n'a plus de sens.

Le système de David et du Parlement est insensé, odieux, mais on comprend au moins en quoi il consiste. Les protestants sont capables de tous les crimes; on en trouve dans une famille de ces maudits un cadavre

1. On prétend expliquer ces évidentes contradictions, en attribuant la brochure en question à deux auteurs, l'un chanoine, l'autre magistrat à Toulouse; mais en ce cas, il serait à regretter que l'Église et la magistrature toulousaines ne se fussent pas mieux entendues cette fois.

tous les membres de cette famille détestable mentent évidemment au premier moment en disant qu'ils ont trouvé mort, sur le plancher du magasin, ce corps encore chaud, qui porte les marques de la mort des pendus. Donc, ce sont eux qui l'ont tué. Et pourquoi? les protestants ne s'assassinent pas entre eux; apparemment ce jeune homme était un catholique. Voilà le système du monitoire de Lagane et de l'arrêt du Parlement.

Aujourd'hui, qu'on se rendrait ridicule en prêtant naïvement au protestantisme des horreurs pareilles, le système tombe et, si l'on était impartial, l'accusation tomberait avec elle; mais on est de Toulouse, et chanoine, et petit-neveu du capitoul Boyer; on croit plaider *pro domo sua* et l'on écrit un livre d'une rare faiblesse, utile en ce qu'il prouve surabondamment que la cause à laquelle on se dévoue est mauvaise, est insoutenable.

Nous craignons un peu d'avoir donné, dans les pages précédentes, à notre contradicteur plus d'importance que son livre n'en mérite. Mais il nous a semblé que notre devoir nous obligeait à montrer tout le néant de la réponse qu'on a faite à la défense des Calas.

Il ne nous reste en finissant qu'à enregistrer l'opinion favorable à notre cause de divers auteurs dont l'autorité est considérable.

La première édition de ce livre a fourni à plusieurs écrivains, dans la plupart des pays d'Europe, l'occasion de se prononcer en faveur des Calas. Nous n'en citerons qu'un seul<sup>1</sup>.

1. Nous croyons cependant qu'il est intéressant pour notre cause d'énumérer les suffrages pour les Calas qui sont parvenus jusqu'à nous; ce sont, à Paris :

Dans la *Gazette des Tribunaux*, M. Duverdy, le 2 janvier 1859 (voir plus haut, p. 127 et Pièces justificatives XXXII);

Dans le *Journal des Débats*, M. Laboulaye, en février 1858 et M. Prevost-Paradol, cité plus loin;

Dans la *Revue de Paris*, M. Maxime Ducamp, le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1858;

M. Prévost-Paradol, à l'occasion du présent ouvrage a inséré dans ses *Essais de politique et de littérature*<sup>1</sup> un éloquent article qui avait paru dans le *Journal des Débats*, le 14 septembre 1859.

En voici quelques courts extraits :

Il y a bientôt cent ans que les membres de Jean Calas ont été rompus par la main du bourreau, qu'il a expiré sur la roue face tournée vers le ciel comme s'il demandait justice, que le cadavre a été brûlé et ses cendres jetées au vent, et cependant l'intérêt de ce drame est aussi profond, les acteurs en sont au

Dans la *Correspondance littéraire*, M. Ludovic Lalanne, 5 janvier 1858

Dans la *Vie Humaine*, M. Riche-Gardon, nov. à déc. 1857, p. 157 ;

Dans le *Petit Journal*, 14 octobre 1863 ;

Dans le *Disciple de Jésus-Christ*, M. Emile de Bonnechose, janv. 1858

Dans la *Revue Chrétienne*, M. Sandoz, 15 mai 1858 ;

Dans *l'Espérance*, M. Bastie, 30 avril 1858 ;

Parmi les feuilles des départements :

Dans *l'Industriel de Mazamet*, M. Camille Maffre, les 13 et 20 décembre 1857, et M. Nouguiès, le 27 décembre ;

Dans le *Courrier du Gard*, K. V. O., 2 février 1858.

A l'étranger :

*The Westminster Review* (Londres), octobre 1858 ;

*The Inquirer* (Londres), 9 janvier 1858, p. 19 ;

*Die Allgemeine Zeitung* (Augsbourg), 23 novembre 1857 ;

*L'Avenir* (Anvers), 23 novembre 1857 ;

*La Revue critique des livres nouveaux* (Genève), janvier 1858, p. 12 et 27 ;

*La Bibliothèque universelle* (Genève), 20 janvier 1858 ;

*La Revue Suisse* (Neuchâtel), octobre 1859 ;

*L'Ami de l'Évangile* (Villeneuve, canton de Vaud), 15 août 1858 ;

*L'Opinione* (Turin), 26 mai 1858 ;

*La Themis* (Hollande), M. de Pinto, 1859 (D. VI. 4<sup>de</sup> St) ;

*Le Maandschrift voor den beschaafden stand*, etc. (Amsterdam) M. J., Spijker, 1858, p. 34 à 38

On nous a informé en Hollande que M. de Bosch Kemper, professeur de droit à Amsterdam, s'est servi de notre travail et s'est appuyé de l'exemple des Calas, dans son écrit sur *l'Appel dans les causes criminelles*, 1858.

Nous ne manquerions pas, après ces avis favorables, d'en faire connaître d'opposés s'ils nous étaient connus. Tout ce que nous pouvons dire, c'est que la rédaction de *l'Univers*, qui avait traité, peu de temps auparavant, Calas de *scélérat*, a fait prendre, le 6 mars 1858, chez notre éditeur, un exemplaire de l'ouvrage en nous offrant, par écrit, d'en rendre compte, et, si nous sommes bien informés, n'a jamais tenu parole.

1. Troisième série, in-8°, 1863.

vivants que le premier jour; on dirait volontiers que ce sang injustement versé n'a pas encore eu le temps de refroidir. C'est que les grands exemples d'iniquité ont du moins ce triste avantage de tenir la conscience humaine en éveil; c'est que tout le monde se sent atteint ou indirectement menacé quand l'erreur ou la passion trouble avec éclat le cours de la justice.

La vie sauvage, avec tous ses périls, mais avec son droit de libre défense, ne devient-elle point préférable à la plus brillante des sociétés polies, si celle-ci n'est plus qu'un piège pour l'innocent qu'a désarmé d'avance sa foi dans la justice? Le tribunal du juge n'est donc rien moins que le sanctuaire de la paix publique, et un jugement injuste, qu'il ait échappé à la passion ou qu'il soit accordé par la bassesse, est le plus direct et le plus dangereux des attentats contre l'ordre social.

Bien des iniquités passent en silence dans le monde; la terre recouvre bien des victimes qui sont tombées sans vengeance et presque sans bruit, accablées par la sottise ou par la méchanceté de leurs semblables; mais parfois le sang injustement versé crie si haut et si longtemps qu'on l'entend d'un bout du monde à l'autre et à travers les siècles. La mort de Calas est devenue un des arguments de l'éternel plaidoyer de la tolérance contre le fanatisme, et son nom seul est un impérissable reproche contre les formes d'une législation aveugle et barbare.

Depuis, un historien illustre, toujours jeune de cœur quand il s'agit de défendre des opprimés, M. Michelet, dans le volume XVII qui, sous le titre de *Louis XV et Louis XVI*, complète son *Histoire de France*, a pris en main la cause des Calas, avec la chaleureuse énergie qui lui appartient et a bien voulu accorder à notre travail un suffrage trop favorable pour que nous osions le reproduire.

Il nous reproche seulement une sorte de froideur ou d'impassibilité que nous nous sommes imposée comme un devoir. Le poète qui a écrit : *Si tu veux que je pleure, commence par verser, toi-même, de véritables larmes*, n'a pas dit que pour convaincre et pour soulever l'indignation, il faille se laisser entraîner par la passion. Si notre lecteur a frémi souvent, d'une juste colère, en présence des conséquences horribles de l'iniquité et du fanatisme que nous avons mises sous ses

yeux, notre but est atteint. Ce sont, nous l'espérons les faits eux-mêmes, impartialement reproduits, *e* non notre sentiment personnel, qui auront fait naître, dans les esprits non prévenus, un sentiment invincible de réprobation pour les juges passionnés, pour les mauvaises lois, pour l'intolérance, et une sympathique vénération pour les Calas, dont la mémoire, au bout d'un siècle, est toujours attaquée par les mêmes ennemis.



## PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES





# PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES.

## I

(Pages 20, 316.)

DOMERC, SECRÉTAIRE DU SUBDÉLÉGUÉ AMBLARD,  
A M. DE SAINT-PRIEST, INTENDANT DU LANGUEDOC.

Monseigneur,

Comme M. Amblard est à sa jardin (sic) et que je n'aurais pas le temps de lui faire signer cette lettre parceque le courrier presse, j'ai l'honneur de vous rendre conte moi-même d'un événement extraordinaire arrivé dans cette ville.

Le fils ayné du sieur Calas négociant fut trouvé hier au soir vers les neuf heures et demy étranglé dans la maison de son père, les portes de la rue fermées. Le père qui était dans sa chambre étant descendu en bas trouva son fils étendu sur la porte du magasin qui est dans l'intérieur de la maison, il appela du

1. Les pièces I, VII, IX, XVII, XIX, sont tirées des Archives de Montpellier, les lettres II-VI, VIII, X-XVI, XVIII, XX-XXVIII, XXX-XXXI, des Archives impériales de Paris, où les minutes de celles de M. de Saint-Florentin se trouvent dans les *Dépêches du Secrétariat*, et les dépêches qui lui sont adressées dans la section historique; le n° XXIX, d'un recueil manuscrit de la bibliothèque du Louvre, les lettres XXXIII à XXXV, la XXXVI<sup>e</sup> et la XXXVII<sup>e</sup> de la collection de M. Fournier; la pièce XXVIII<sup>e</sup> des Archives de l'Hôtel-de-Ville de Paris, et la dernière, des papiers de la Beaumelle, appartenant à sa famille.

secours en criant qu'on avait assassiné son fils. Plusieurs personnes qui se trouvèrent dans la rue accoururent au bruit, firent ouvrir les portes et virent le cadavre qui était déjà froid, sans qu'il parut sur lui aucune marque d'assassinat sinon qu'il était sans habits. Il y eût un chirurgien du nombre, qui vérifia ce cadavre et après lui avoir ôté une cravate noire qu'il avait au cou, il reconnut qu'il avait été étranglé avec une corde, par l'empreinte qu'elle avait fait. On fut avertir MM. les capitouls de cet événement. M. David s'y transporta vers les dix heures et demy avec l'escouade du guet, il fit conduire en prison le père, la mère, leur fils cadet, la fille de service et deux étrangers qui avaient soupé chez eux : on a procédé pendant la nuit à leur audition. Ce meurtre a fait une grande sensation dans cette ville. Tout le monde est dans une consternation étonnante dans le quartier du sieur Calas père, que l'on soupçonne de concert avec la famille d'être l'auteur, parceque le jeune homme donnait depuis quelques tems des marques de catholicité contre le gré de ses parens et qu'il était même à la veille d'abjurer leur religion.

M. Amblard vous informera exactement des suites de cette affaire. J'ay l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, monsieur, votre très-obéissant serviteur,

DOMERC, secrétaire de M. Amblard<sup>1</sup>.

## II

(Pages 26, 49, etc.)

### VERBAL DE DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE<sup>2</sup>.

L'an mil sept cent soixante un et le treizième jour du mois d'octobre, nous François Raymond David de Beaudrigue, Écuyer, Capitoul, étant dans notre maison d'habitation vers les onze heures et demy du soir, sont survenus les sieurs Borrel, ancien

1. Cette lettre, écrite avec une hâte extrême, dès la matinée du 14, est doublement remarquable, parce qu'elle peint naïvement l'émotion violente que produisit la découverte du cadavre et parce qu'elle confirme pleinement ce que nous avons dit des cris que poussa Calas père, en trouvant son fils mort, et qui donnèrent l'éveil à tout le quartier. On n'avait pas encore imaginé que ce fussent les cris d'un homme que l'on étrangla.

2. Copié par moi sur l'original à Toulouse.

Capitoul, et Trubelle, négociant de cette ville, qui nous ont dit que, passant dans la Grand'Rue, accompagnant un Monsieur qui avait soupé avec eux, ils ont trouvés vis à vis de la maison du S. Calas un nombre infini de personnes et ayant demandé le sujet de cet attroupement, il leur a été dit qu'on avait trouvé dans la maison dudit S. Calas, un homme assassiné et mort ; et sur cet avis nous nous sommes rendus à l'hôtel de ville pour prendre notre main forte et après avoir fait avertir maître Monyer notre assesseur nous nous sommes rendus avec notre dit assesseur et la main forte, chez le S Calas, après avoir fait avertir Messieurs les gens du Roy qui se sont trouvés absents ; et ayant trouvé la porte d'entrée de la ditte maison fermée avons frappé à la d. porte qu'une fille de service nous a ouvert, et étant entré dans l'allée il s'est présenté à nous un jeune homme et l'ayant interpellé de nous dire s'il n'y avait pas dans la ditte maison un cadavre, mort depuis peu de mort violente, il nous a dit que le fait était vrai, et ayant pris de sa poche une clef il nous a ouvert la porte de la boutique qui donne dans la ditte allée et nous a conduit auprès la porte d'un magasin qui est à suite de ladite boutique auprès de laquelle avons trouvé le cadavre d'un jeune homme couché sur le dos, nue tête, en chemise, n'ayant que ses culottes, ses bas et ses souliers ; et ayant demandé au dit jeune homme qui étoit le dit cadavre il nous a répondu que c'étoit son frère fils du S Calas marchand, et ayant examiné ledit cadavre il nous a paru qu'il n'étoit pas mort de mort naturelle, ce qui nous a obligé de mander venir M<sup>e</sup> Latour, médecin et les sieurs Peyronnel et Lamarque, chirurgiens jurés de cette ville ; lesquels s'étant rendus, après avoir exigé d'eux le serment en tel cas requis, nous leur avons enjoint de procéder à la veriffication du cadavre et de dresser la relation de son état et de la cause de sa mort et de la remettre incessamment devers le greffe ; et de suite après que lesdits sieurs Latour, Peyronnel et Lamarque ont eu procédé, nous avons fait transporter ledit cadavre dans l'hôtel de ville, à la chambre de la gêne, de même que son habit qui s'est trouvé sur le contoïr du même magasin où ledit cadavre étoit étendu. Et ayant fouillé les poches de sa veste et de son habit il si est trouvé son mouchoir dindienne dans une des poches du d. habit et dans les deux poches de la veste il si est trouvé plusieurs lettres et papiers inutiles et dans les poches de la culotte un canif et un couteau à pliant. Ledit habit étant en drap bleu melange avec une veste danquin. Ledit cadavre portant des

culottes aussi danquin, bas de soye noirs et des boucles de fer à ses souliers et celles des jarrettières étant de laiton de même que les boutons des manches. Et en nous retirant affin de prendre des éclaircissements et découvrir la preuve de la cause de la mort dud. cadavre, nous avons fait conduire dans l'hôtel de ville les S<sup>rs</sup> Calas père et fils, la D<sup>lle</sup> Calas mère, la fille de service dud. Calas, le S Lavaisse et un espèce d'abé qui se sont trouvés dans la maison et dans la chambre du S<sup>r</sup> Calas père, et de ce dessus avons fait et dressé le présent verbal que nous avons signé avec ledit M<sup>e</sup> Monyer notre assesseur et notre greffier pour être statué ce qu'il appartiendra

DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE

*Capitoul*

MONYER, *assesseur*

Michel DIEULAFOY,

*greffier*

### III

(Page 31.)

LE CAPITOUL DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE

A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Toulouse, 18 octobre 1761.

Monseigneur,

J'ay l'honneur de vous envoyer cy joint une coppie du verbal que j'ay dressé dans la faire du sieur Calas, ensemble une coppie de la relation de l'état du cadavre de Marc Antoine Calas son fils. Quoyque vous puissiez être instruit par la lecture du procès-verbal, néanmoins je vay avoir l'honneur de vous faire un petit détail de cette affaire.

Je feus averty mardy soir vers les onze heures et demy du soir qu'on avoit assassiné le fils ayné du sieur Calas; je m'y transporte de suite avec ma main forte, et entré dans le magasin de la boutique du sieur Calas, je trouvay sur la porte d'entrée le cadavre de Marc-Antoine Calas fils ayné étendu à terre; je fis de suite garder les portes et je m'assuray de toutes les personnes qu'y composoient ladite maison. Je fis procéder de suite à l'état du cadavre, et cela fait, je fis arreter le père, la mère, le fils, la servante du sieur Calas et le sieur Lavaysse fils qu'y avait soupé

avec eux et les fis conduire avec le cadavre a l'hotel de ville, ou je reçus de suite leur audition d'office. Apres quoy je les fis mettre en prison et les fis separer pour qu'ils n'eussent aucune communication. Je suis cette procédure avec vigueur et je ne perds pas un moment, pour y donner toutes les suites qu'exige une affaire de pareille nature. J'ay crû, monseigneur, qu'une affaire de cette importance devoit vous estre communiquée; elle intéresse, ce me semble, l'État et la religion. Je serois bien flatté, Monseigneur, sy dans ces circonstances, vous approuviés ce que jay fait jusqu'a present et me mander vos ordres la dessus pour que je les exécute de point en point; quoyque le chef du consistoire soit absent et que je le représente par ma place, néanmoins mon expérience ne m'a pas laissé douter de procéder ainsy que je l'ay fait.

J'ay l'honneur de vous envoyer encore une exemplaire du monitoire. Il ne se passera rien dans cette affaire que je n'aye l'honneur de vous en informer. Soyés persuadé, Monseigneur, de mon zéle et de toute mon affection dans cette affaire, et que je ne negligerais rien pour parvenir à découvrir la vérité.

J'ay l'honneur d'être avec un très-profond respect, Monseigneur,

Votre très-humble et obéissant serviteur

DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE,  
*Capitoul, chef du Consistoire en l'absence  
de M. Faget.*

#### IV

(Pages 28, 117.)

#### RAPPORTS DES MÉDECIN ET CHIRURGIENS.

##### 1. RELATION DE L'ÉTAT DU SIEUR MARC-ANTOINE CALAS, FILS AÎNÉ. (DU 14 OCTOBRE 1761.)

Nous, JEAN-PIERRE LATOUR, professeur royal en médecine, ordinaire de l'Hôtel-Dieu St-Jacques de cette ville et Nous JEAN-ANTOINE PEYRONNEL et JEAN-PIERRE LAMAPQUE, maitres en chirurgie de la même ville, certifions qu'ayant été requis ce matin, 14 octobre à minuit et demi ou environ, de nous transporter en la maison du sieur Calas, marchand à la Grand-Rue, pour visi-

ter un corps mort, et qu'ayant prêté serment dans ladite maison entre les mains de M. DAVID, Capitoul, pour procéder à cette visite, nous avons soigneusement examiné ce corps qui était encore un peu chaud, que nous avons trouvé sans aucune blessure, mais avec une marque livide au col, de l'étendue d'environ demi-pouce, en forme de cercle, qui se perdoit sur le derrière dans les cheveux, divisé en deux branches sur le haut de chaque côté du col; rendant de la morve et de la bave par le nez et par la bouche, et ayant la face livide : ce qui nous a fait juger qu'il a été pendu encore vivant, par lui-même ou par d'autres, avec une corde double qui s'est divisée sur les parties latérales du col, et y a formé les deux branches livides que nous avons dit y avoir observées. Ce que nous certifions véritable. An foi de quoi nous avons signé le présent rapport.

## II. PROCÈS-VERBAL D'AUTOPSIE.

RELATION FAITE PAR LE SIEUR LAMARQUE, CHIRURGIEN.

(15 OCTOBRE 1761.)

Nous Jean Pierre Lamarque, maître en chirurgie, a la réquisition de M. de Peimber avocat du Roy, nous nous sommes rendus au petit consistoire de la maison de ville, en présance de M. David, Capitoul, des MM. Monyer, Labat asseceurs; a la réquisition sus-dite nous a esté fait lecture d'un ordre en ce qui nous commit (concerne?) en exécution d'une précédente ordonnance, pour faire l'ouverture du cadavre de Marc-Antoine Calas, pour nous si donnant (ci devant?) signifiée à l'efest de le metre dans la chau, dans rapporter l'état, les sirconstances et conjectures, et s'il si trouve des allimens ressans. En conséquence de laquelle ordonnance du mandement du dit M. David, l'avons prêté le serment en tel cas requis, et la dite ordonnance ayant été remise dans nos mains, sommes passés à la chambre appelée de la torture, et avons trouvé le cadavre ci-devant vérifié, de Marc-Antoine Calas. Avant de faire aucune ouverture, havons commencé par faire un examen général de tout son corps, et n'avons trouvé rien de plus, que ce que nous avons suffisamment détaillé dans la relation precedante; havons commencé par faire l'ouverture de la teste et ensuite du cervueau, dans lesquels nous n'havons trouvé que des vaisseaux extrêmement gorgés qui sont les suite ordinaire des mors de cette espèce; havons passé à l'ouverture de la poitrine, où nous n'avons trouvé rien de particulier

et de là havons commencé par l'examen de l'estomac, qui d'abord nous a paru nestre chargé que de très-peu d'alimens. Cependant comme il estait naiscessaire de faire un rapport exact, nous nous sommes déterminé à l'ouvrir et havons commencé l'ouverture, tout près de l'orifice supérieur du côté de la grande courbure, et l'havons ouvert dans les deux tiers de son estendue; là, aidé par mes deux élèves havons fait soutenir les deux portions de l'estomac tout près des divisions, et havons trouvé une humeur grisâtre qui estait en assés grande quantité, parmi laquelle nous havons trouvés quelque pos de resins avec quelque peau de volaille, quelque petit morceau de autre viande, qui nous a paru être du buf. Ces espèces de viande que nous avons lavé dans de l'eau claire nous a pareu estre fort dure, et fort coriasse. Par l'exposé que nous venons de faire il paroît : 1° que le cadavre avait mangé trois ou quatre heures avant sa mort, car la digestion des alliments était faite ; 2° nous regardons ces morceaux de viande coriasces avoir esté pris au dîner, ou dans l'après midi, alliments qui n'avait pas peu être entièrement broyés, divisés et absorbés tant par le suc gastrique, que par l'action de l'estomac luy meme, et autres mouvements qui d'un commun accord divisent les alliments qui nont pas de visces principaux opposés aux effets de la digestion; car la loy générale de la digestion, est que les alimens ayant esté broyés dans la bouche ou ils souffrent la première préparation, tant par les dens que par la salive qui les pénètre de toute pars, ces alliments sont ensuite passés dans l'œsophage et tombent dans l'estomac; là ils sont broyés et divisés par les agens dont j'ai déjà parlé et approposé que ces alliments sont décomposés ils prennent la couleur grisâtre; le temps que l'on observe selon nos lois pour ceste opération de la nature, est fixé a trois ou quatre heures. Avons passé ensuite aux intestins grêles ou se perfectionne la digestion, ou nous avons trouvé très peu des veines tachées; le mésataire estoit extrêmement gorgé par les artères et veines mesantériques. Havons examiné le reservoir de pecquet, ou reservoir du chille, où nous en avons trouvé en asses grande quantité, en foy de quoy nous donnons la présente relation pour servir tant que de besoin.

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## V

(Pages 84, 87.)

LE PRÉSIDENT DE SENAUX A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN <sup>1</sup>.

Toulouse, 20 octobre 1761.

Monsieur,

Il est arrivé mardi dernier un meurtre dans cette ville, qui par sa nature semble intéresser l'État.

.... Ce même jour treizième du courant, le peuple accourut en foule vers les onze heures du soir pour avertir et requérir les Capitouls de se transporter chez le nommé Calas marchand en draperie qui, disoit-on, venoit d'étrangler son fils âgé de 28 ans avec le secours de sa mère, d'un autre fils et du nommé Lavaysse. Et cela par la raison que cet infortuné garçon travaillait à abjurer la religion protestante ou il était né et dont son pere et sa famille font profession.

(Averti par les Capitouls, M. de Senaux est allé lui-même aux prisons s'assurer de leur sureté, a donné une sentinelle du guet à chacun d'eux et a défendu toute communication tant *entr'eux qu'avec qui que ce fût sans exception.*)

.... La procédure est commencée à la requette du ministère public, et jusqu'à present les depositions des temoins ne fournissent que de violents soupçons contre ces accusés, et j'espère que les preuves deviendront complètes par les révélations que produiront un chef de monitoire qui fut publié hier matin à cet effet. D'ailleurs les variations et les contradictions ou sont tombés ces accusés entr'eux fortifieront les preuves.

.... Voilà, Monsieur, à peu près le détail de cette affaire qui comme vous voyez est de nature à interesser l'Etat, surtout arrivant après l'émeute des huguenots de Caussade dont j'ay eu l'honneur de vous rendre compte<sup>2</sup>.

J'ai celuy, etc.

DE SENAUX.

1. Nous ne donnons que par fragments cette lettre et celles qui portent les n<sup>os</sup> XX et XXX, parce qu'elles contiennent, ou des répétitions sans intérêt, ou des faits entièrement étrangers au procès des Calas.

2. Il s'agit du projet qu'avaient formé, disoit-on, quelques protestants de sauver le pasteur Rochette qui avait été arrêté. Une panique, sans motifs réels, eut lieu à cette occasion. (Voir à ce sujet l'*Histoire des Églises du Désert*, t. II, p. 269 et suiv.)

## VI

(Page 318.)

M. DE SAINT-PRIEST, INTENDANT DE LANGUEDOC<sup>1</sup>,  
AU MÊME.

Montpellier, 23 oct. 1761.

Je fus informé par le précédent courrier d'un meurtre commis en la personne du sieur Calas fils; mais comme on ne me marquoit aucun détail et que cette affaire est d'une si grande importance, j'ai cru devoir attendre que je fus mieux instruit pour vous rendre compte des faits.

Lesieur Calas, négociant a Toulouse, est un des plus zélés protestants du royaume. Il avoit trois fils. L'un s'est converti, il y a quelques années, et en conséquence de vos ordres le père lui fait une petite pension qui est très-mal payée.

L'ainé a été trouvé mort et étranglé dans le magasin ou arrière-boutique de la maison de son père le 13 de ce mois. Les soupçons sur les auteurs de cet assassinat ont varié pendant quelques jours : les uns prétendirent que ce jeune homme s'étoit tué lui-même, et c'est le système de deffense de son père et de ses coaccusés; les autres que c'étoient son père et son frère qui l'avoient étranglé.

Les Capitouls s'étant transportés sur les lieux, ont fait arrêter le père, la mère, le fils, la servante et un jeune homme fils du sieur Lavaysse, célèbre avocat, qui avait soupé ce soir-là chez le sieur Calas. Ils ont fait sur-le-champ la procédure, et le cadavre ayant été emporté à l'hôtel de ville, son état a été constaté par un rapport de chirurgien.

.... On prétend qu'il résulte des interrogatoires des accusés, des faits et des contradictions qui fortifient les soupçons du public, et on pense que c'est Calas père et son autre fils qui ont étranglé ce jeune homme. La procédure fournit jusqu'à présent, à ce qu'on m'assure, des indices très-violens contre eux; vous pourrez en juger, Monsieur, par les chefs du monitoire dont la

1. Jean-Emmanuel de Guignard, vicomte de Saint-Priest, conseiller, puis maître des requêtes, et enfin conseiller d'Etat, resta jusqu'à sa mort intendant de Languedoc; il fut le père du ministre de Louis XVI mort en 1821, lequel fut le grand-père du comte Alexis de Saint-Priest, auteur de l'*Histoire de la suppression de l'Ordre des jésuites*, membre de l'Académie française, de l'Assemblée nationale, etc.

publication a été ordonnée ; j'en joins icy une copie. On prétend, mais on n'assure pas le fait, que depuis cet événement, il est arrivé beaucoup de huguenôts à Toulouse. Les Capitouls ont pris les précautions convenables. J'aurai attention de vous instruire des suites de cette procédure.

J'ai l'honneur, etc.

DE SAINT-PRIEST.

## VII

(Page 316.)

AMBLARD, SUBDÉLÉGUÉ A TOULOUSE,  
A M. DE SAINT-PRIEST.

Toulouse, le 24 octobre 1761.

Monseigneur,

Les Capitouls ont ordonné un monitoire sur l'affaire du sieur Calas. Les témoins vont révéler, pour ainsi dire, en foule ; et quoique la procédure soit extrêmement secrète, on croit qu'il y a des preuves suffisantes pour établir que ce jeune homme a été victime et martyr de la religion catholique. Les délais pour la publication du monitoire retardent le jugement de cette procédure. Les huguenots qui étaient venus à Toulouse, ainsi que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous le marquer, en très-grand nombre, repartirent le lendemain, parce qu'ils furent instruits que les Capitouls commençoient à se donner des mouvemens pour les rechercher et s'informer du motif qui les attiroit à Toulouse. Ils s'étoient vraisemblablement donné rendez-vous à peu près à la même heure, car ils arrivèrent presque tous à la fois et en plusieurs bandes, et ce fut précisément ce qui les découvrit, parce que les portiers voyant entrer des cavaliers en petites troupes de dix ou douze qui se succédaient d'assez près, crurent devoir en donner avis à MM. les Capitouls.

J'ay l'honneur d'être avec un très-profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur,

AMBLARD.

## VIII

(Pages 98, 316.)

DÉPOSITION DE L'ABBÉ DUGUÉ, HEBDOMADIER  
DE SAINT-ÉTIENNE.

Voici sur la prétendue assemblée des protestants où Marc-Antoine aurait été condamné à mort et sa famille chargée de le tuer, la seule déposition qui ait quelque apparence de précision; par celle-là on pourra juger des autres.

« Pierre Dugué, prêtre hebdomadier de l'église de Saint-Étienne, dépose qu'étant dans la boutique de la demoiselle Bordeneuve, avec elle et cinq filles qui travaillaient, un homme de trente à quarante ans vint et dit : qu'il avait été dans la maison de Calas le jour de la mort dudit Marc-Antoine et que là il apprit les circonstances suivantes : que le jour de la mort dudit Marc-Antoine, il y eut une délibération tenue chez les Calas par sept personnes, du nombre desquelles étaient les sieurs Calas et Lavasse et autres, et qu'ils délibérèrent s'ils tueraient ledit Marc-Antoine avant ou après le souper; qu'ils délibérèrent de prendre une corde pour étrangler ledit Marc-Antoine en haine de ce qu'il devait faire sa première communion le lendemain; qu'ils délibérèrent s'ils ne l'enterraient pas après, dans la cave dudit Calas, pour qu'il ne fût plus question dudit Marc-Antoine. Le déposant, ayant entendu ces faits si circonstanciés, fut curieux de savoir le nom de l'homme de qui il les avait entendus comme il l'a dit ci-dessus, chez la demoiselle Bordeneuve, et à cet effet il est retourné depuis chez lesdites demoiselles Bordeneuve pour leur demander le nom de cet homme; elles n'ont jamais voulu le lui dire. » (*Arch. Imp.*)

D'où vient que la justice ne les y contraignit pas? Comment et de qui l'inconnu avait-il appris, dans la maison même de Calas, le fait et tous les détails du conseil secret? Voilà donc ce conseil discutant, non s'il fallait tuer ce jeune homme (il n'y avait pas à délibérer là-dessus, puisque chez les protestants, c'était la règle); non s'il était vrai que ce même jeune homme eut voulu se faire catholique (dans la pensée de l'abbé Dugué, cela n'était douteux pour personne), mais s'il fallait l'étrangler *avant ou après le souper*. Quel pauvre esprit que cet hebdomadier de Saint-Etienne! Et il

ne s'avise que le lendemain de demander quel est cet in  
Voilà cependant sur quels témoignages Jean Calas a été

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## IX

(Page 316.)

LE SUBDÉLÉGUÉ AMBLARD

A M. DE SAINT PRIEST.

Toulouse, le 28 octobre 1

Monseigneur,

Le monitoire produit, à ce que l'on prétend, des preuves complètes du meurtre du sieur Calas avec des circonstances de horreur. Les Capitouls doivent ordonner aujourd'hui la procédure extraordinaire. Les accusés sont gardés à vue et personne ne peut leur parler ni les voir. On tient en même temps dans les prisons du palais le ministre avec plusieurs prisonniers qui se sont révoltés et qui ont fait sédition dans la généralité de Montauban. Ils sont tous gardés à vue, chargés de fers, et quatre sentinelles depuis la porte de la prison jusques à la porte de garde de la place du Salin qui, en cas de besoin, se présente à la garde. Ce semblé d'un coup de sifflet, et cette garde a été doublée. Ces deux événemens, presque dans la même époque, ne peuvent nuire aux accusés respectifs. J'ay l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, votre très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur,

AMBLARD

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## X

(Pages 31, 228.)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN

AU CAPITOUL DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE.

31 octobre 1

J'ai reçu, Monsieur, la lettre et les pièces que vous m'avez adressés concernant le meurtre qui paraît avoir été commis par une personne du sieur Calas fils. Je ne peux que louer l'activité

laquelle vous avez travaillé à constater ce délit et à faire arrêter les parents de ce jeune homme qui semblent en être coupables. Vous me ferez plaisir de m'informer des suites de cette affaire qui mérite une attention singulière de votre part<sup>1</sup>.

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## XI

(Page 228)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN  
AU PRÉSIDENT DE SENAUX.

31 octobre.

Je vous suis très-obligé, Monsieur, de la peine que vous avez prise de m'informer du meurtre arrivé en la personne du sieur Calas fils. Cette affaire, comme vous me l'observez, est d'une grande importance et mérite une attention particulière. Il est fort à désirer que la vérité soit éclaircie et qu'il survienne des preuves suffisantes. Les précautions que vous avez prises pour mettre en sûreté les prisonniers sont très-sages et très-nécessaires. Je ne doute pas que vous ne vouliez bien veiller à la suite de cette affaire dont l'instruction ne sauroit être trop rigoureuse<sup>2</sup> ni trop prompte.

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## XII

(Page 116)

### Extrait d'un Brief intendit.

MÉMOIRE DU BRIEF INTENDIT POUR RÉITÉRER L'INTERROGATOIRE, QUE BAILLE DEVANT VOUS, MESSIEURS LES CAPITOUIS, LE PROCUREUR DU ROI CONTRE LES NOMMÉS, *etc.*, ACCUSÉS ET DÉCRÉTÉS.

. . . . .  
16° Interroger le sieur Lavaisse s'il étoit logé chez le sieur Ca-

1. Il avait dicté d'abord : *d'une affaire aussi grave et l'attention la plus particulière*; ces mots ont été remplacés comme on vient de le voir.

Nous avons reproduit ces dépêches d'après les minutes actuellement existantes aux *Archives impériales*.

2. *Rigoureuse* est une correction du ministre. Il y avait *exacte*.

zeing, et pour quoy il passa presque toute la journée avec Calas cadet et s'ils ne proposèrent pas (*sic*) à l'ainé de promener avec luy.

- 17° Interroger le dit sieur Lavaisse s'il n'a conseillé luy même que dans la crainte de l'abjuration publique, il ne falloit point différer de se defaire de Marc-Antoine Calas, sy le sieur Cazeing et Clausade ou autres n'ont été de même serment.
  - 18° Sy aucun de ceux de la religion pretendue reformée auxquels avoit (*sic*) conféré depuis son arrivée de Bordeaux na dit que la religion exigeroit la perte de Marc-Antoine Calas, et s'il ne la dit luy même, et s'il n'a en assisté à aucune assemblée ou Conférence ou cette resolution aye été prise, principalement le matin treize du courant.
  - 19° Sy étant logé chez le sieur Cazaing il a là vu dans l'intervalle du quatorze au treize (*sic*) plusieurs personnes de leur secte avoir des Conférences secrettes avec le sieur Cazeing et les sieurs Calas père et fils, et en quel nombre, s'ils n'apparussent sérieux comme des gens qui ont une affaire importante.
  - 20° S'il ne vit pas les sieurs Calas père et fils se rendre chez Cazeing au matin, s'ils y demeurèrent longtemps, s'ils conférèrent en présence de luy qui repond.
  - (*sic*) Les interroger, s'ils n'exécuterent eux memes l'action le soir à l'entrée de la nuit, en faisant mettre à genoux ou assoir sur deux chaises M. A. Calas.
  - 21° Si ne l'ayant pas fait eux mêmes, ils ont loué ou fait louer des gens à prix d'argent, qu'ils ont introduit ou souffert qu'ils furent introduits dans la maison pour détruire M. A. Calas qui estoient ces gens là, d'où ils étoient et quand ils s'en retournèrent.
  - 22° S'il n'est vray que leurs confédérés de la R. pr. ref. se chargèrent du soin de trouver des zélés ou des serviteurs pour l'action et de les introduire.
  - 23° Les interroger enfin si ce ne fut eux même qui étranglèrent Marc-Antoine Calas, quel est celui d'entr'eux qui le fit mettre à genoux ou assoir, ou le coucha par terre, et qui est celui qui tordit la corde et s'il ne le suspendirent après qu'il perdu ses forces.
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## XIII

(Page 31)

LE CAPITOUL DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE  
A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Toulouse, 19 novembre 1761.

Monseigneur,

L'affaire dont j'avois eu l'honneur de vous envoyer le verbal contre les nommés Calas a été jugée hier a l'hotel de ville et y a passé immissio<sup>1</sup>rem a ce que les accusés seront appliqués à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire ; l'accuzation d'un crime de cette espèce exigeoit un jugement plus rigoureux ; tant par ce qu'il résulte des preuves de cette procédeure que par l'intérêt public quy demandoit un exemple ; mon avis n'a pas été suivy ; mais il me reste l'espérance , que le parlement quy va les juger de suite, corrigera cette sentence, et par la le public se trouvera satisfait et le crime ne restera pas impuny ; j'ay crû, Monseigneur, que vous ne désapprouveriez que j'aye l'honneur de vous informer de cette affaire. J'en feray de même lorsque l'arrêt sera rendu ; quoyque mes confreres n'ayent pas secondé mon zelle dans cette affaire, néanmoins j'oze vous assurer, Monseigneur, que cela ne diminuera en rien mon activité à contenir le bon ordre ; et a mériter s'il est possible par tous mes soins votre puissante protection.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec un tres profond respect, Monseigneur,

Votre ties humble et tres  
obéissant serviteur,

DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE,  
*Capitoul.*

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1. Pour *in mitiorem*, c'est-à-dire la peine la moins forte.



## XIV

(Page 123)

LE COMTE DE ROCHECHOUART  
A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

A Parme, le 5 décembre 1761.

Monsieur,

Les bontés que vous m'avez témoignées en tant d'occasions m'autorisent à y recourir en faveur d'une personne à qui je dois beaucoup d'égards. C'est le sieur Lavaysse, avocat au parlement de Toulouse, dont le fils a été impliqué dans une affaire malheureuse qui ne laisse aucun soupçon sur son innocence. Ce père affligé me mande, Monsieur, qu'il a eu l'honneur de vous adresser un mémoire contenant le détail du fait qui a donné lieu à cette accusation. Comme il m'en a envoyé en même temps une copie, j'ai été en état de m'en instruire. Il ne faut que jeter un coup d'œil sur la procédure, pour reconnoître l'esprit de vertige et de rumeur populaire qui en a été le principe. Tout y est sans fondement et hors de la plus légère vraisemblance.

Je ne compte donc, Monsieur, que réclamer votre justice contre des calomnies odieuses, et vous faire connoître l'intérêt que je prends à un homme de probité, qui depuis nombre d'années a bien mérité de toute la province du Languedoc par ses longs travaux et une conduite irréprochable.

Je suis avec respect

Monsieur

Votre très-humble et très-  
obeissant serviteur,  
ROCHECHOUART.

## XV

(Page 31)

LE CAPITUL DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE  
A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Toulouse, 9 décembre 1761.

Monseigneur,

J'avois eu l'honneur de vous marquer dans ma dernière lettre que je vous instruirois de l'arret que le parlement rendroit au ~~u-~~

jet de l'affaire des Calas, qui interesse toutes les provinces. Il fut rendu samedi dernier sixieme du courant; le public attendoit avec impatience l'exemple que merite un crime de cette espece. Voicy l'arret, il passa immissiorem, que l'inquisition commencée seroit continuée d'autorité de la Cour; cependant j'auray l'honneur de vous observer, Monseigneur, que quoy qu'il passat immissiorem, il y eut cinq voix a les rompre vifs; nous attendons a present les nouvelles decouvertes que fera M. le procureur general pour donner plus de force a cette inquisition. J'auray l'honneur, Monseigneur, de vous informer de tout ce qui se fera a ce sujet, même du second arret quy sera rendu. Je redoubleray mon zelle et mon attention pour contenir le bon ordre et meriter par mes soins votre puissante protection.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec un très-  
profond respect,

Monseigneur,

Votre très-humble et très-  
obéissant serviteur,  
DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE,  
*Capitoul.*

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XVI

(Page 228)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN A M. DE ROCHECHOUART.

20 décembre.

J'aurais été fort aise, M., de faire plaisir au sieur La Vaysse dont je connais les talents et la probité, et j'aurais surtout été charmé de luy faire ressentir combien votre recommandation a de poids auprès de moi. Mais l'affaire dans laquelle son fils se trouve malheureusement impliqué est sous les yeux de la justice. Le Parlement en est saisi, et il est d'autant plus impossible d'en arrêter ni même d'en suspendre le cours que le titre de l'accusation est des plus graves, qu'il a du rapport à la religion et qu'il fixe l'attention de toute la province. Le S. Lavaysse m'avait écrit dans les commencements pour obtenir un sursis, mais le Roi à qui je rendis compte de sa demande et des motifs sur lesquels il la fondait ne jugea pas à propos d'y avoir égard.

## XVII

(Pages 184, 316)

M. DE LAMOIGNON, CHANCELIER DE FRANCE, A M. DE SAINT-PRIEST,  
INTENDANT DE LANGUEDOC.

A Versailles, le 25 février 1762.

Monsieur,

Vous n'ignorez pas sans doute que le parlement de Toulouse instruit un procès criminel contre le nommé Calas et sa femme, accusés d'avoir étranglé leur fils qui était sur le point d'abjurer la religion protestante, dont on dit qu'ils font profession. Pendant le cours de cette procédure il a été distribué de la part des protestants (car ils ne déguisent point leur qualité) différens mémoires, pour justifier les accusés. Ce procès sera décidé suivant la qualité des preuves : comme elles ne me sont pas parvenues, je n'en porte aucun jugement. Mais il vient d'être répandu dans la ville de Toulouse un écrit fort injurieux au parlement, dont il ne tardera pas, si fait n'a été, de demander la suppression et même la condamnation à être brûlé. La suite de ce jugement doit être une information contre les auteurs et distributeurs de l'écrit. Or on ne peut douter que le distributeur de l'écrit soit le nommé Paul Rabaul (*sic*), demeurant à Nismes, qu'on dit être protestant, puisqu'il a signé lui-même une partie des exemplaires de l'écrit en question qui sont parvenus aux magistrats de Toulouse. Si le parlement se porte à le décréter, comme il y a tout lieu de le croire, les suites de cette accusation peuvent être considérables. Peut-être serait-il convenable que le décret qui serait rendu par le Parlement ne fut pas exécuté. Prenez la peine de me mander ce que vous en pensez et s'il n'y aurait pas de mesures à prendre pour prévenir les suites d'un arrêt que le Parlement ne peut s'empêcher de rendre et dont on ne peut le blâmer. Le Roy est instruit de cette affaire et c'est en conséquence du compte que je lui en ai rendu que je vous écris la présente.

Je suis, Monsieur, votre affné serviteur.

DE LAMOIGNON.

## XVIII

(Pages 184, 228)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN A M. DE BONREPOS,  
 PROCUREUR GÉNÉRAL.

2 mars 1762.

J'ai, M., rendu compte au Roi des observations que vous avez prises la peine de me faire au sujet du libelle imprimé qui s'est répandu en Languedoc à l'occasion de l'affaire du S. Calas. S. M. approuve que vous donniez votre réquisitoire pour faire proscrire ce libelle. Mais elle croit à propos que l'exemplaire que vous représenterez soit du nombre de ceux que Paul Rabaud n'a pas souscrits, en sorte qu'en requérant contre l'ouvrage, vous puissiez vous dispenser de requérir contre l'auteur ou du moins contre celui qui l'avoue. Il pourra arriver que quelque membre de la Comp. le dénonce et représente quelque exemplaire signé de lui. En ce cas là, vous pourrez prendre contre lui telles conclusions que vous aviserez et qui, à ce que je vois, tendront au décret de prise de corps, et suivant toutes les apparences, le Parlement l'ordonnera. Ce que S. M. désire de vous, dans cette conjoncture, c'est que vous ne précipitiez rien ; il y a tout lieu de croire que Rabaud informé de ce décret disparaîtra et peut être se retirera en pays étranger. Si cependant il a l'audace de continuer à se montrer, vous pourrez le faire arrêter en vertu du décret. Mais alors il faudra que vous preniez de bonnes mesures pour prévenir toute secousse et pour que l'autorité du Roi et du Parlement ne souffre aucune atteinte. Je connais votre prudence et je suis bien persuadé que vous ne négligerez aucune des dispositions qu'une pareille circonstance exige.

## XIX

(Pages 184, 316)

M. DE SAINT-PRIEST AU CHANCELIER DE LAMOIGNON.

Montpellier, 5 mars 1762.

Monsieur, j'ai reçu la lettre dont vous m'avez honoré au sujet d'un écrit injurieux au parlement de Toulouse distribué de la part

des protestants à l'occasion du procès des Calas et dont quelque exemplaires sont signés par le nommé Paul Rabaût qu'on vous a dit être un protestant demeurant à Nismes. Vous pensez M. que le parlement de Toulouse va informer contre les auteurs et distributeurs de cet écrit, et que s'il vient à décréter le nommé Rabaût, il serait peut-être convenable d'empêcher l'exécution de l'arrêt.

Le nommé Paul Rabaût est un fameux ministre de la religion P. R. ; il est regardé comme le chef des ministres et prédicants qui sont répandus dans le Languedoc et particulièrement de ceux qui sont dans les Cévennes et dans le Lavonage (*sic*). Sa résidence ordinaire est à Nismes. C'est lui qui étant à la tête d'un nombre assez considérable de protestants, remit à M. de Paulmy un placet sur le grand chemin de Montpellier à Nismes<sup>1</sup>. Il n'y a pas longtemps qu'il publia une lettre pastorale dont j'adressai un exemplaire à M. le Cte de St-Florentin. Enfin cet homme est en très-grande vénération parmi ceux qui professent sa religion ; conséquemment l'exécution du décret ne seroit rien moins que facile, parce que les protestants avertis du danger dont le ministre seroit menacé, ne négligeraient rien pour le soustraire aux poursuites du Parlement. Cette cour sentira bien sans doute jusqu'où elle doit pousser l'exécution de son arrêt, si elle en rend un ; car si ce ministre venoit à être arrêté dans la circonstance présente, où il y a très-peu de troupes en Languedoc, je ne garantis point que son arrestation ne causât une fermentation dangereuse. Au surplus le nommé Paul Rabaût n'est point d'un caractère séditieux, on le dit au contraire assez doux ; il est âgé d'environ cinquante ans.

Je pense donc M., que si le Parlement décrète cet homme de prise de corps, il est à propos d'empêcher l'exécution de l'arrêt. Je suis, etc...

1. Erreur ; quand il s'exposa ainsi, il étoit absolument seul, il se nomma et le ministre de Louis XV, ému de son courage, se découvrit, en recevant le placet de ses mains, devant ce proscrit qu'il aurait dû légalement faire pendre ou rouer.

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XX

(Page 448)

LE PRÉSIDENT DE SENAUX A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Toulouse, 10 mars 1762.

(Il annonce au Ministre que Calas est condamné).

. . . a être rompu vif, a être expiré deux heures sur une roue, après quoy il sera étranglé et sera jeté sur un bucher ardent pour y être brûlé et consommé. Cette dernière peine est une réparation due à la Religion dont l'heureux changement qu'en avoit fait son fils a été vraisemblablement la cause de sa mort.

Je m'empresse, Monsieur, de vous instruire de cet arrêt en conséquence des ordres réitérés que vous m'avez donnés à ce sujet, par lesquels en approuvant ma conduite et mon zèle pour l'éclaircissement des preuves de cette affaire d'État vous me chargeates expressément de vous instruire sans délai du jugement qui interviendrait. Je le fais avec d'autant plus de plaisir que j'unis dans cette occasion mon inclination à mon devoir, heureux si mes travaux assidus et mon application exacte au service du Roy et du Public me conservent la continuité de vos bontés.

XXI

(Pages 31, 34)

LE CAPITOU L DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE  
AU MÊME.

Toulouse, ce 10 mars 1762.

Monseigneur,

Comme je me suis fait un devoir de vous informer de tous les evenements qui se passeront en cette ville, et nottamment concernant l'affaire des Calas, j'ay l'honneur de vous asseurer qu'ils feurent jugés hier, et que par l'arrêt qui est intervenu Calas le pere est condamné a etre rompu vif et a expirer deux heures sur la roue, préalablement appliqué à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire, après quoy jetté dans un bucher ou son corps réduit en cendres seront jettées au vent (sic). On a sursis au jugement des

autres jusqu'après l'exécution. J'auray la même intention de vous informer du Jugement des autres.

J'ay l'honneur d'être avec un très profond respect

Votre très humble et  
très obéissant serviteur

DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE  
*Capitoul*

## XXII

(Pages 26, 172)

LE PRÉSIDENT DU PUGET  
AU MÊME.

Toulouse le 10 mars 1762.

Monseigneur,

Je croirois manqué à mon devoir si je n'avois l'honneur vous informer de l'arrêt que la Chambre Tournelle a rendu jour d'hier et auquel j'ay présidé, contre la famille Calas, protestants, accusés de l'assassinat d'un de leur fils et frère qui étoit en même (sic) de se convertir. Comme je sçay, Monseigneur, vous êtes instruit des circonstances de cette affaire, je me contenteray seulement de vous informer que l'arrêt condamne Calas père à être appliqué à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire de suite rompu vif et son corps ensuite brûlé, et sur ceoit jugement des autres prévenus jusqu'après le testament de M. de Calas père. L'action est des plus noires et les motifs affreux et d'une très dangereuse conséquence pour l'Etat; mon zèle pour le service du Roy m'engage de vous représenter, Monseigneur, qu'il seroit essentiel de trouver des moyens pour empêcher l'entrée des Ministres de la Religion prétendue Réformée dans le Royaume, et empêcher leur commerce avec ceux de même Religion qui sont dans les pays étrangers, où ils enseignent des maximes sanguinaires qu'ils viennent répandre dans nos contrées en procurant par là des crimes affreux. Je suis avec le plus profond respect

Monseigneur

Votre très humble et très  
obéissant serviteur  
DU PUGET.

## XXIII

(Page 228)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN A M. LE PRÉSIDENT DU PUGET.

20 mars 1762.

Je vous suis très obligé, M. d'avoir bien voulu m'instruire de l'arrêt qui vient d'être rendu contre Calas père. Je vous le serai également de me faire part des révélations qu'il aura faites dans son testament de mort, et des suites qu'elles auront eu par rapport aux autres accusés. Vous pensez avec raison qu'il seroit fort intéressant d'empêcher les prédicants d'entrer dans le Royaume et d'avoir aucun commerce avec ceux des pays étrangers. Mais les ménagements que la guerre rend nécessaires ne permettent guère de s'en occuper actuellement. Lorsque la paix sera revenue je suis persuadé que S. M. prendra les mesures qu'elle croira les plus efficaces pour réprimer ce désordre.

## XXIV

(Page 31)

LE CAPITOUL DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Toulouse le 27 mars 1762.

Monseigneur,

Jay l'honneur de vous informer de l'arrêt qui a été rendu contre les autres accusés de Calas. Le Fils a été condamné au Bannissement hors du Royaume et à perpétuité, la femme de Calas, Lavaysse et la servante ont été mis hors de Cour. Cet arrêt n'a pas laissé que de surprendre tout le monde, qui s'attendoit à quelque chose de plus rigoureux.

Le procureur de Calas Pere donna une requette pendant qu'on examinoit le procès dans laquelle il demandoit de s'inscrire en faux contre la procédure, et disoit que l'extrait étoit infidelle en ce qu'on avoit ajouté un mot décizif; cette requette fut rejetée parce qu'elle n'étoit pas suivie d'une procuration de la partie; cependant M. le Rapporteur vint vérifier le fait qu'il trouva bien en regle, et comme cette calomnie retomboit sur



moi qui avés visé l'extrait de la procédeure, et que l'original  
 avoit été toujours en mon pouvoir, je crus qu'il convenoit d'en  
 porter plainte à la chambre Tournelle et en consequence trois  
 de mes confreres et moy fumes à la chambre Tournelle porter  
 notre plainte verballe, sur laquelle il est intervenu arrêt qui  
 condamne ce procureur en trois mois d'interdiction et ordonne  
 qu'il se rendra devers le greffe criminel du parlement, où en  
 présence d'un commissaire a ce député, il déclarera que mal-  
 cieusement et inconsiderément il s'est porté à présenter une  
 pareille requête contre la juridiction de Messieurs les Capitoulx,  
 dont il se repend et demande pardon et en consequence que la  
 requette sera biffée et lacérée. Ce procureur nommé Durroux  
 doit se pourvoir au conseil en Cassation dud. arrêt. Sy cela ar-  
 rivoit, permettés moy, Monseigneur, de vous demander votre  
 puissante protection. Je tacherai de la meriter par mon zelle et  
 mon attention a exécuter dans toutes les occasions vos ordres.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec un très-profond respect, Mon-  
 seigneur

Votre tres humble et  
 tres obeissant serviteur  
 DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE  
 Capitoul.

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 XXV

(Page 283)

LE PRÉSIDENT DU PUGET AU MÊME.

Toulouse, 27 mars 1762.

Monseigneur,

J'ai prévenu vos dezirs en ayant eu l'honneur de vous informer  
 de l'arrest que le parlement a rendu contre les complices  
 Calas. Cette procedure ayant commancé devant les Capitoulx  
 avec Monyer assesseur de cette juridiction, on a vu que Monyer  
 avoit prévarié dans ses fonctions, ce qui a donné lieu à la  
 chambre Tournelle, sur les conclusions de M. le procureur gé-  
 néral de décréter ledit Monyer d'ajournement et d'ordonner l'en-  
 quis contre luy, et la procédure se fait.

Dans le temps, Monseigneur, que nous etions occupés au jui-  
 gement de Calas père, Duroux fils, procureur en la Cour, pr

senta une Requette au nom du dit Calas, de sa femme et de son fils, qui tendoit à accuser tout le Tribunal des Capitouls et notamment un d'eux de faux et de prevarication, sur laquelle Requette nous rendîmes un arrêt de néant. Cependant les Capitouls ayant été instruits de cette Requette vinrent en porter plainte au parlement qui leur en octroya acte. Duroux fils, mandé venir et ouy, après avoir avoué la dite Requette a été condamné à se transporter au greffe pour, en présence d'un Commissaire, déclarer qu'inconsidérément et témérairement il a fait, présenté et fait signer cette Requette, laquelle sera lacérée par le greffier, dont il sera dressé procès verbal, et au surplus, l'interdit pour trois mois de ses fonctions.

Agréés, Monseigneur, que je profite de cette occasion pour vous prier d'obtenir du Roy des lettres de cachet pour faire enfermer dans un couvent Anne et Anne-Rose Calas filles de ce malheureux père. L'ainée est la plus obstinée dans sa Religion et la cadette a des dispositions pour se convertir. Il y a lieu de craindre que cette cadette ne persiste pas dans cette bonne résolution étant revenue avec sa mère qui est fort entêtée et avec sa sœur. Et si Sa Majesté se détermine à les faire enfermer je crois qu'elles doivent l'être dans des couvents différents. D'ailleurs elles sont très jeunes; Anne Calas n'a que vingt-un ans, et Anne Roze Calas 20<sup>1</sup>. Celle cy a un patrimoine particulier de 18 à vingt mil francs qui peut fournir à son entretien. Et Anne Calas aura sa portion des biens que la loy luy donne sur ceux de son père. J'espère que vous voudrés bien avoir égard à la représentation que la Religion m'inspire de vous faire. Je suis avec respect, Monseigneur

Votre tres humble et  
tres obeissant serviteur  
Du PUGET.

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1. Anne (ou Nanette) que le président du Puget appelle l'ainée était la cadette; c'est elle qui avait quelque bien.

## XXVI

(Page 228)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN A M. DE BONREPOS, PROCUREUR GÉNÉRAL. AL.

4 avril.

J'ai reçu M. les lettres par lesq. vous avez pris la peine de m'informer des jugements rendus par le Parlt dans l'affaire des Calas. Je ne doute pas qu'ils n'aient été rendus conformément à ce qui a résulté des informations et procédures. Mais j'aurais fort désiré que Calas eût, par son aveu, confirmé la justice de la condamnation intervenue contre lui. Cela aurait pu empêcher les mauvais propos des ministres et les impressions fâcheuses qu'ils donnent à cette occasion à leurs adhérents. Le Roi a approuvé le dessein où vous êtes de faire chercher les deux jeunes filles de Calas et de les faire arrêter et mettre dans un couvent. Je vous envoie les ordres que vous demandez à cet effet. J'ai fait laisser le nom du couvent en blanc; vous voudrez bien le faire insérer dans les ordres lorsque cela deviendra nécessaire<sup>1</sup>. Je verrai par quels moyens il sera possible de procurer à Calas fils une pension qui le mette en état de subsister. Cependant il me paraît qu'il est d'âge à remplir quelque état et à se procurer de quoi se soutenir par lui-même.

## XXVII

(Pages 223, 228)

LE MÊME AU MÊME.

22 mai.

Je vous suis obligé M. du détail dans lequel vous avez bien voulu entrer avec moi sur les motifs qui ont déterminé le jugement du Parlement dans l'affaire de Calas. Je ne peux qu'approuver les arrangements que vous avez pris pour placer les deux filles dans deux couvents différents. Les ordres du Roi que

1. *Mots biffés* : Je parlerai à M. l'évêq. d'Orléans pour voir s'il possible de procurer à Calas fils une pension sur les... (La phrase inachevée.) C'est de Louis qu'il s'agit.

est  
est

**je** vous ai adressés me paraissent comme à vous suffisants pour remplir vos vœux. Si cependant il s'y rencontrait quelque difficulté, sur l'avis que vous prendrez la peine de m'en donner, j'en expédierai sur le champ de nouveaux et je vous les enverrai.

Ce que vous me marquez de la V<sup>e</sup> Calas me semble mériter attention : s'il est vrai qu'elle fasse la prédicante aux environs de Montauban, je me ferais d'autant moins de scrupule de proposer au Roi de la faire enfermer qu'il y a toute apparence qu'elle était complice du crime de son mari, et que ce n'est que par le défaut de preuves juridiques qu'elle a échappé à la punition. Je vous prie donc de vous faire informer plus particulièrement de la conduite de cette femme, et de me marquer ce que vous en aurez appris et ce que vous en penserez.

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## XXVIII

(Page 228)

VOLTAIRE A M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Aux Délices 2 juillet 1762.

Monseigneur,

On me conjure de prendre la liberté de vous adresser ces pièces, et je la prends. Je vous supplie d'excuser l'attendrissement qui me force à vous importuner. Je crois l'innocence des Calas démontrée. Et j'ose vous dire que plus d'une nation vous bénira si vous daignez protéger une famille malheureuse et la plus vertueuse mère réduite à l'état le plus horrible.

J'ay l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect

Monseigneur

Votre très humble, très obéissant  
et très obligé serviteur

VOLTAIRE.

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## XXIX

(Page 228)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN A M. LE DUC DE FITZ-JAMES<sup>1</sup>.

Versailles, 27 janvier 1763.

Vous avez pensé, Monsieur, avec raison que la réimpression faite à Montpellier du Mémoire des Calas, ne pouvait que produire de mauvais effets, et l'imprimeur Rochard se trouvant d'ailleurs en contravention aux règlements de la librairie, vous avez très bien fait de faire saisir les exemplaires imprimés et de faire rompre la planche.

Le Roy à qui j'en ai rendu compte a fort approuvé la conduite que vous avez tenue en cette occasion.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec un très-parfait attachement, Monsieur, etc.

## XXX

(Page 228)

LE MÊME A M. DE SAINT-PRIEST.

3 mars 1764.

(Le ministre l'approuve d'avoir défendu la vente d'un *Traité sur la tolérance*<sup>1</sup> qui s'est débité à Montpellier; il aurait même pu en faire saisir les exemplaires.)

Bien loin qu'il se vende publiquement à Paris, comme le libraire a voulu vous le faire entendre, j'ai au contraire donné les ordres les plus précis pour faire saisir tous les exemplaires qui pourraient y arriver.

P. S. Ce livre n'ayant pas paru ici et ne m'étant pas connu, je vous prie de m'en envoyer une couple d'exemplaires.

1. Extrait d'un recueil manuscrit in-folio de la Bibliothèque du Louvre, portant au dos : R. P. R. *Copies de pièces*, 1772. (Série E, n° 1469).

2. Par Voltaire.

## XXXI

(Pages 228, 262)

M. DE SAINT-FLORENTIN A M. LE CONTROLEUR GÉNÉRAL <sup>1</sup>.

17 avril 1765.

ai l'honneur, M. de vous envoyer un mémoire de Louis Calas. C'est un fils de celui qui a été condamné par le Parlement de Toulouse. Il y a quelques années qu'il s'est converti. Sa famille l'avait abandonné en haine de sa conversion et il a fallu employer l'autorité du Roi pour obliger son père à lui payer une pension. Il paraît par son mémoire que le don qui vient d'être fait par S. M. à sa famille se distribue entre sa mère, son frère et ses deux sœurs, qu'il en est exclu et qu'il ne demande pas à y partager. Il se borne à demander qu'une pension de 100 fr. qu'il a sur les économats soit augmentée. J'approuve le zèle et l'intéressement qu'il marque en faveur de sa mère, de son père et de ses sœurs. Mais il me paraît essentiel qu'il partage avec eux la gratification accordée par S. M., à moins qu'il ne soit accordé quelque grâce particulière, du moins aussi marquée et qui même emporte quelque distinction. Tous les protestants du Royaume ont eu et ont encore les yeux ouverts sur le sort des Calas. Ils ne tarderont pas d'être informés de la faveur que cette famille vient d'obtenir du Roi. Et que pourront-ils penser lorsqu'ils verront que le seul catholique de cette même famille n'y a aucune part? Ce sera pour eux un motif de triomphe, et ce qu'il y a de plus fâcheux, un nouveau motif propre à retenir et à fortifier la persuasion où ils sont déjà, par l'avis de leurs ministres, que le Roi est décidé pour la tolérance. L'indocilité où nous restons, faute de troupes, en Languedoc et dans la plupart des Provinces infectées de l'hérésie ne le leur persuade déjà que trop. Aussi, suivant les dernières nouvelles que j'ai reçues de Languedoc, les Protestants y deviennent de jour en jour plus audacieux. Dans le mois dernier il y a eu des assemblées de 6,000 hommes dans le diocèse du Puy. Le jour de la Pentecôte il s'en est tenu une très-nombreuse presque aux portes de Montpellier, où résident le Commandant et l'Intendant de la Province. Depuis peu on a tenté jusqu'à deux fois de bâtir un

<sup>1</sup> De Laverdy succéda à Bertin le 12 décembre 1763 et resta contrôleur général jusqu'en 1769. Il périt sur l'échafaud en 1794.

temple dans une paroisse de cette même Province. Si l'on ne peut actuellement remédier à tous ces désordres, il est du moins important de ne pas laisser croire que S. M. les approuve. Il est important que l'on sache qu'elle persiste dans l'intention où elle a toujours été de protéger la R. C. et de n'en pas souffrir d'autre dans son Royaume. Des circonstances singulières l'ont déterminée à accorder une gratification à une famille protestante et publiquement reconnue telle. Mais il ne faut pas que l'on puisse en rien conclure en faveur de la Religion que cette famille professe. C'est néanmoins ce qui arriverait si un catholique de cette famille, à qui le malheur commun donne le même droit aux bontés de S. M. s'en trouvait privé. Les Protestants ne manqueraient pas de s'en prévaloir et en même temps ce serait un véritable sujet d'affliction pour les Catholiques et pour les nouveaux convertis et une raison d'éloignement pour ceux des Religionnaires qui auraient quelque disposition à rentrer dans le sein de l'Eglise.

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## XXXII

(Page 251)

### EXTRAIT DU REGISTRE DES REQUÊTES ORDINAIRES DE L'HOTEL DU ROI AU SOUVERAIN.

*Entre le procureur général du roi, demandeur, d'une part, et Anne Rose Cabibel, etc. (suivent les noms et qualités des quatre accusés) tous défendeurs et accusés, détenus es prisons de la Conciergerie du palais, d'autre part.*

Vu par les maîtres des requêtes ordinaires de l'hôtel du roi, juges souverains en cette partie, tous les quartiers assemblés, le procès-verbal dressé par le sieur François-Raymond David de Beaudrigue.... (Suivent l'énumération des pièces du quadruple procès et l'analyse des plus importantes, en 34 pages in-8°.) APRÈS que lesdits Anne-Rose Cabibel, veuve dudit Jean Calas, Jean-Pierre Calas, Alexandre-François Gualbert Lavaysse et Jeanne Viguière ont été interrogés derrière le barreau, chacun séparément, pour ce mandés et amenés des prisons de la Conciergerie du Palais où ils ont ensuite été reconduits. Ouï le rapport de sieur Dupleix de Bacquencourt, chevalier, conseiller du Roi en

es conseils, maître des requêtes ordinaires de son hôtel, commissaire à ce député; tout vu et considéré :

LES MAÎTRES DES REQUÊTES ORDINAIRES DE L'HOTEL DU ROI, juges souverains en cette partie, tous les quartiers assemblés, faisant droit sur le procès, ensemble sur les requêtes et demandes desdits Anne-Rose Cabibel, Jean-Pierre Calas, Alexandre-François Gualbert Lavaysse, Jeanne Viguière, accusés, et desdits Louis, Jean-Donat, Anne-Rose et Anne Calas, ont déchargé et déchargé Anne-Rose Cabibel, Jean-Pierre Calas, Alexandre-François Gualbert Lavaysse et Jeanne Viguière de l'accusation intentée contre eux; ORDONNENT que leurs écrous seront rayés et biffés de tous registres où ils se trouveront inscrits; à quoi faire, comme aussi à les mettre hors des prisons de la Conciergerie où ils sont détenus, tous greffiers, concierges et geôliers seront contraints, même par corps, en vertu du présent jugement, lequel sera transcrit en marge desdits écrous; quoi faisant ils en demeureront bien et valablement déchargés; DÉCHARGENT pareillement la mémoire de Jean Calas de l'accusation contre lui intentée; ordonnent que son écrou sera rayé et biffé de tous registres; à quoi faire, tous greffiers, concierges et geôliers seront contraints, même par corps; comme aussi à inscrire le présent jugement en marge desdits écrous, quoi faisant ils en demeureront bien et valablement déchargés; SUR la demande desdits Anne-Rose Cabibel, Jean-Pierre Calas, Alexandre-François Gualbert Lavaysse, Jeanne Viguière, Louis, Jean-Donat, Anne-Rose et Anne Calas, en prise à partie et dommages-intérêts, les ont renvoyés et renvoient à se pourvoir ainsi qu'ils aviseront. ORDONNENT qu'à la diligence du procureur général de Sa Majesté, le présent jugement sera imprimé et affiché partout où besoin sera. DONNÉ à Paris, aux requêtes de l'hôtel, le neuf mars mil sept cent soixante-cinq. Collationné. Signé DEFORGE.

A PARIS, DE L'IMPRIMERIE ROYALE, 1765.

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Voici sur cet arrêt les remarques de M. Ch. Duverdy dans la *Gazette des Tribunaux* (2 janvier 1859).

« Cette décision fut prise à l'unanimité, et l'on peut y remarquer que la commission a eu soin de viser toutes les pièces de la procédure, et qu'elle a même analysé les plus importantes. Elle connaissait donc la procédure, elle l'avait étudiée avec une at-



tention scrupuleuse, et c'est de cette étude qu'était résultée pour elle la conviction unanime que le parlement de Toulouse avait commis une erreur en condamnant Calas père.

« Aujourd'hui où les débats des procès criminels doivent se faire oralement, on ne pourrait réviser un verdict du jury, parce qu'il est impossible de savoir ce qui a déterminé la conviction des jurés. Sous l'empire de l'ordonnance de 1670, il n'en était pas de même : les procès criminels, comme nous l'avons déjà indiqué, se jugeaient sur pièces écrites; de sorte que les juges chargés de la révision avaient exactement sous les yeux les mêmes éléments de conviction que les premiers juges. Il était possible, par conséquent, de faire contrôler un arrêt criminel. On comprend alors toute l'autorité qui doit s'attacher à l'arrêt rendu par les maîtres des requêtes de l'hôtel dans le procès de Calas. Par la réhabilitation de sa mémoire, le dernier mot de la justice a été la reconnaissance de son innocence. »

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### XXXIII

(Page 263)

#### M. DE MAUREPAS A MADAME CALAS.

Pontchartrain, 6 juin 1765.

J'avais, Madame, prévenu Mme la duchesse d'Enville des reproches que vous faisait M. de Saint-Florentin, afin que, quand vous le verriez, vous puissiez les prévenir et vous justifier comme il me paraît que vous étiez en état de le faire. La lettre de M. le Vice Chancelier dont vous m'envoyez la copie<sup>1</sup> me paraît très-suffisante pour cet effet. Je la garde pour la faire voir à M. de Saint-Florentin et lui prouver que vous n'avez fait que vous conformer aux ordres que vous aviez reçus. Je serai toujours très-aise de pouvoir contribuer à adoucir vos malheurs et vous prouver, Madame, les sentiments avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être votre très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur,

MAUREPAS.

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1. Voir plus haut, p. 255.

## XXXIV

(Page 76)

MADAME CALAS A M. DE LA BEAUMELLE, A MAZÈRES.

Paris, ce 30 mars 1766.

Monsieur

Je n'ay point ignoré les obligations que je vous ay et tous les  
 services que vous m'avez rendue en tout occasions, M. de la  
 Vaysse de Vidou m'a fait part en dernier lieu Monsieur d'un tres  
 net et tres exelant memoire que vous avez pris la peine de faire  
 pour moy; je n'ay point d'expression pour vous en marquer ma  
 reconnaissance. j'en suis pénétré, n'en douté pas Monsieur, rece-  
 vant, mes plus sinceres remerciements, et soyez assuré de  
 toute l'étendue de ma gratitude, je voudrais trouver des occa-  
 sions a vous convaincre de la verité de mes sentimens, que je ne  
 puis que trop foiblement vous exprimer, ils sont les memes je  
 vous assure pour Madame de la baumelle votre chere épouse a  
 qui je presente mes obéissances

Je vous ay adressé a M. de la Vaysse pere à toulouse une de nos es-  
 tampe pour vous faire passer, je vous prie l'un et l'autre de l'ac-  
 cepter. je souhaite quelle vous fasse plaisir, vous y trouverez une  
 parfaite ressemblance avec le cher beau frere; nous le sommes  
 aussi mais non pas dans la meme perfection; cet à dire mes fil-  
 les, le tout ensemble est cependant approuvée a paris, je desire que  
 vous le trouviez de meme. M. vigués<sup>1</sup> a qui je vous prie  
 de dire bien des choses pour moy se servira aussi de ma part par la  
 meme voy une de mes estampe que je le prie d'accepter. je n'ay  
 peu me procurer la collection de nos memoires comme il le sou-  
 haite il son devenue rare au point qu'on n'en trouve plus a paris  
 que d'imparfait. ma famille vous assure et a Madame de la bau-  
 melle de leur respect et moy je suis avec la plus parfaite considé-  
 ration

Monsieur

Votre tres humble et tres  
 obeissante servante  
 anne Rose CABIBEL CALAS

1. Ce nom parait désigner M. Vignes, de Mazères.

## XXXV

(Page 272)

MADAME CALAS A VOLTAIRE.

Paris, le 27 décembre 1770.

Monsieur,

Si je ne me feusse pas trouvé incommodé des le landemain de mon arrivée a paris, mon premier soin aurait certainement été de vous remercier de l'accueil que vous avez daigné me faire a ferne; je m'acquite aujourd'hui de ce devoir et quoyque ce soit bien tard, mon cœur n'an est pas je vous assure moin pénétrée de reconnaissance pour les bontes infinie que vous m'avés témoigne.

Je vous prie Monsieur d'agreer Mes vœux pour la conservation de vos jours et de votre santé, personne ne peut en faire de plus sincere ny de plus étendue, ils sont proportioné aux obligations que je vous ay, Ceux de ma famille sont les même elle me charge de vous en assurer et de leurs profond respect. Ozeraije Monsieur vous prier de faire agréer nos obéissance a Mme Denis nous faisons les vœux les plus sinceres pour sa conservation.

Jay l'honneur d'etre avec un très profond respect  
Monsieur

Votre tres humble et tres  
obéissante servante  
Veuve CALAS.

## XXXVI

(Page 272)

LAVAYSSE A VOLTAIRE.

Trouvés bon, Monsieur, que je me joigne a notre respectable veuve pour vous assurer de mon respect et des vœux que je fais pour votre santé, pour la conservation de vos jours et la satisfaction de vos desirs. Mme Calas, toute sa famille et moi n'aurons jamais qu'un cœur et qu'une voix pour sentir vos bienfaits et les celebrer.

Vous aurez appris depuis peu la cruelle disgrace de M. le duc

de Choiseul. Nous en sommes aussi pénétrés que vous, la consternation paraît générale.

Agreez encore, Monsieur, de nouvelles assurances des sentiments d'estime, d'admiration et de respect avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d'être

Monsieur

Votre très humble et très obéissant

Serviteur

LAVAYSSE.

## XXXVII

(Page 272)

### VOLTAIRE A MADAME CALAS.

Nous avons trouvé, dans la Collection de M. Fournier, la réponse de Voltaire aux deux lettres qui précèdent, adressée, le 19 janvier 1771 de Ferney, à Mme Calas. En voici un fragment :

« C'était à moi, madame, de vous remercier de l'honneur et du plaisir infini que vous m'avez fait. La chose du monde que je désirais le plus, c'était de vous voir. J'étais comme les premiers chrétiens, qui auraient fait cent lieues pour aller baiser les mains de la veuve d'un martyr. J'ai été enchanté de me trouver entre vous et vos filles et votre gendre : je me croyais de la famille. Il me manquait M. de Lavaysse, que je joins ici à vous, et à qui je fais mes très-tendres compliments. »

## XXXVIII

(Page 44)

### ACTE DE SÉPULTURE DE MADAME CALAS.

Ce jourd'hui 30 avril 1792 à huit heures du soir a été inhumée au Cimetière des Étrangers à Paris demoiselle Anne Rose Cabibel, veuve de Jean Calas, négociant à Toulouse, native de Londres, âgée d'environ quatre vingt deux ans, décédée le jour d'hier en sa demeure, sise rue Poissonnière n° 9, de suite d'un catard

et, de son grand âge, dans les sentimens de la religion protestante, ladite inhumation faite en présence de nous Pierre François Simonneau, commissaire en cette partie et commissaire de police de la station du Ponceau, et celle de M. Antoine Vincent Formentin, juge de paix de la section de Bonne-Nouvelle, demeurant à Paris rue Beauregard n° 54, de Sr Etienne Fabre, citoyen, dem<sup>t</sup> à Paris rue des deux Boules, de Gabriel Julien Dangirard, citoyen, dem<sup>t</sup> à Paris rue Beauregard, de Louis Daniel Tassin, banquier, dem<sup>t</sup> à Paris rue neuve des Petits Champs n° 6, de Henry Dumas, citoyen, dem<sup>t</sup> à Paris rue Poissonnière n° 169, et Jean Lazard De La Planche, ministre du Saint Évangile, dem<sup>t</sup> à Paris rue des Geuneurs n° 7, qui ont signé avec nous

L. D TASSIN

FORMENTIN

DUMAS

G DANGIRARD

J. L. DE LA PLANCHE

FABRE

SIMONNEAU.

*(Extr. du Reg. du Cimetière des Protestants étrangers<sup>1</sup> établi à Paris par arrêt du Conseil d'État du 20 juillet 1720.*

*Dépôt de l'Etat civil à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris, coté n° 89 infol.*

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### XXXIX

(Page 288)

PLACET DES DEMOISELLES CALAS AU COMTE DE SAINT-FLORENTIN  
PAR LA BEAUMELLE<sup>2</sup>.

Monseigneur,

Deux infortunées se présentent à vous. Elle osent à peine nommer : leur nom est devenu un opprobre. Cependant elles espèrent beaucoup de leur infortune même et encore plus votre justice.

1. Ce cimetière était sis rue de l'Hôpital Saint-Louis.

2. Tout n'est pas exact dans ce placet, quant à la situation de l'une des deux sœurs, Nanette Calas, chez les Visitandines. Quant à Robert au contraire, le tableau que trace La Beaumelle n'est que trop vrai. C'est le sort des protestantes enfermées au couvent par lettre de cachet que bien des familles avaient pu en instruire l'écrivain.

Après un arrêt dont l'Europe a retenti, nous nous hâtâmes de quitter la ville injuste où il avait été prononcé. Nous vivions dans la retraite auprès d'une mère à qui nous avions à faire oublier nos malheurs et les siens, lorsqu'un ordre du roi, surpris à votre équité, vint nous arracher de ses bras, nous ramena dans cette même ville où tout nous retrace les plus affreux objets et ne nous laissa pas même la consolation de pleurer ensemble. Nous fûmes mises dans des prisons différentes, car quel autre nom donner à ces couvents où nous languissons depuis quatre mois, gardées à vue, privées de tout commerce, et traitées en criminelles ?

Jusqu'ici, Monseigneur, nous n'avons pu vous faire entendre nos voix ; c'est par une espèce de miracle qu'une âme charitable est enfin parvenue à réunir nos prières, nos plaintes et nos larmes. Elles vous seront présentées ; l'espérance renaît dans nos cœurs. Vous ne permettrez pas, Monseigneur, que nous finissions dans le désespoir notre déplorable vie. Vous nous rendrez à cette mère qui ne peut vivre sans nous, sans laquelle nous ne pouvons vivre. Le peu de bien qu'à l'une de nous suffirait presque à nous nourrir toutes les trois réunies. Notre dispersion retranche des aliments à celle à qui nous devons le jour ! — Tous nos parents sont-ils donc destinés à périr par les malheurs de leurs enfants ?

On vous a fait entendre, Monseigneur, que nous avions du penchant pour la religion Catholique. Hélas ! après qu'on nous eût tout ravi, nous osions espérer que du moins on nous laisserait nos consciences. Nous nous flattons encore, Monseigneur, que vous n'avez pas voulu les gêner, mais les interroger seulement. Daignez donc entendre ce qu'elles vous répondent aujourd'hui. Rien n'est plus faux que cette imputation. Nous sommes nées, nous avons été élevées, nous avons vécu et nous mourrons, s'il plaît à Dieu, Protestantes. Nous le déclarons avec d'autant plus de confiance, que nous parlons à un ministre trop juste pour nous punir de ne pas penser comme lui.

De plus, rien n'est plus mal imaginé. Si nous avions témoigné quelque inclination pour la religion du royaume, il y en auroit eu quelque vestige dans cette procédure où tant de témoins déposèrent d'après leurs desirs. Et s'il y en avoit eu, le zèle du parlement n'auroit laissé rien à faire à l'autorité. Plusieurs des juges qui au lieu d'écouter nos sollicitations pour notre père, nous exhortoient à croire comme eux, pourroient attester qu'ils entrevirent que notre religion nous étoit d'autant plus chère qu'elle nous étoit plus funeste. Il nous seroit sans doute avan-

tageux de penser comme on nous l'ordonne. Mais, Monseigneur, dépend-il de nous de croire ? et la dissimulation, en nous faisant paroître catholiques, ne nous rendroit elle pas indigne de l'être ?

D'ailleurs, le moyen qu'on prend pour nous ebranler, suffiroit pour nous affermir. On dit communément qu'en souffrant pour certaines opinions on s'y affectionne. Nous pouvons bien, Monseigneur, vous assurer qu'on dit vrai.

Si nous avions eu pour la religion du royaume cette inclination qu'on nous prête, tout ce qui s'est passé, tout ce qui se passe nous l'auroit ôtée. Le supplice ou à vrai dire le martyre d'un père immolé à la haine de l'hérésie, les vexations que nous essuyons tous les jours, le mépris qu'on témoigne ici pour des mystères respectables en nous invitant à les profaner, tout cela n'est pas propre à nous faire adopter une religion qu'on nous fait si peu aimer. On veut que nous embrassions les dogmes Catholiques et l'on commence par leur fermer toutes les avenues de nos cœurs.

Ces religieuses nous disent sans cesse que nous ne serons libres qu'après avoir abjuré nos erreurs, c'est à dire après que nous aurons mérité de ne l'être pas. C'est là tyranniser et corrompre nos âmes : et vous voulez seulement, Monseigneur, qu'on les éclaire. Mais quelles instructions attendre de Théologiens qui tentent d'arracher à notre faiblesse ce qu'elles désespèrent d'obtenir de notre persuasion ? Elles nous présentent des docteurs. Mais quelle impression peuvent faire des raisonnements qu'on entend malgré soi ? Il faut être libre et tranquille pour goûter des entretiens si sérieux et nous sommes dans les fers dans la désolation.

D'ailleurs on n'efface pas des esprits les idées que l'éducation prit soin d'y graver. L'une de nous a vingt-deux ans ; l'autre en a vingt et un ; à cet âge on a choisi et sans doute ce n'est pas un crime à nous d'avoir choisi comme la moitié de l'Europe.

Notre persévérance à nous éloigner de toutes les cérémonies catholiques ajoute à l'horreur qu'on a pour nous. Mais cet acte continu de protestantisme peut à la fin inspirer quelques doutes aux jeunes pensionnaires. De sorte que tous les refroidissemens de la dévotion vont nous être imputés. Traitées aujourd'hui comme des hérétiques nous sommes à la veille de l'être comme des scandaleuses.

Qu'il vous plaise donc, Monseigneur, nous conserver la vie qu

d'aussi accablantes vexations vont nous ôter, révoquer cet ordre qui nous rend plus malheureuses, mais qui ne nous rendra jamais catholiques, et nous permettre d'aller rejoindre notre mère à Paris, afin que par la réunion de nos interets et de nos efforts nous puissions faire réhabiliter la mémoire d'un père qu'un arrêt declara coupable et que huit jours après un second arrêt reconnut innocent.







# LETTRES DE LA SŒUR ANNE-JULIE FRAISSE.

« Je pense actuellement qu'un quelqu'un qui ne nous connoitroit pas et qui verroit nos lettres; vous, jeune et jolie demoiselle protestante, et moy, vielle et laide religieuse, en seroit bien surpris. »

(Lettre XVI.)

## AVERTISSEMENT.

La sœur Anne-Julie Fraisse ou de Fraisse était née à Carcassonne, avec le dix-huitième siècle, le 6 janvier 1700. Élevée sous le règne de Louis XIV, elle entra très-jeune au couvent. L'influence qu'elle sut exercer au dehors en faveur des Calas, le mariage de sa sœur avec M. de Berthier, d'une famille qui a donné deux premiers présidents au parlement de Toulouse, sa parenté très-proche avec M. d'Auriac, président au grand conseil et gendre du chancelier de Lamoignon, tout indique que les parents d'Anne-Julie occupaient une position élevée ; mais je n'ai pu trouver ni à Toulouse, ni ailleurs, aucun renseignement à leur sujet<sup>1</sup>. Elle mourut le 11 mars 1777, soixante ans après avoir été reçue visitandine.

Peu nous importe sa famille. C'est par son caractère personnel que la sœur Anne-Julie nous intéresse.

Voici comment l'historien des *Églises du Désert* apprê-

<sup>1</sup> M. Salvan nous apprend cependant que sa vie a été imprimée et se trouve dans les archives du monastère actuel de la Visitation à Toulouse.

ciait cette correspondance qu'il m'a confiée et que je publie aujourd'hui, selon son désir.

« Ces lettres sont charmantes de pensée et souvent de style. Loin de se brouiller avec la jeune Calas, qui n'avait point voulu se convertir dans leur maison, ces respectables sœurs et surtout la sœur Julie devinrent ses amies pour la vie. Il y eut un commerce du plus tendre intérêt entre elle et toute la communauté. C'était un cœur bien aimant et une bien respectable personne que la sœur Fraisse. Nous n'avons jamais mieux senti, qu'en lisant cette correspondance touchante, combien les plus doux sentiments de l'âme ont eu quelquefois la vertu d'éteindre les haines dévot<sup>1</sup>. »

Le caractère général de ces lettres me paraît être la sensibilité la plus vraie, la plus chaleureuse, exprimée avec beaucoup de naturel, de grâce et d'esprit.

Le langage est souvent incorrect. Quelquefois, il est facile de reconnaître que la Religieuse a pensé en patois du Languedoc la phrase qu'elle traduit négligemment en français. Plus souvent elle commet des archaïsmes, et parle, sans y songer, sous le règne détesté de Voltaire, la langue vieillie de Louis XIV, qui s'est conservée plus vivante entre les murs du couvent que sur le théâtre du monde et dans la littérature du jour. Souvent aussi elle se permet, comme le duc de Saint-Simon, ces inversions brèves et hardies, ces constructions bizarres et rapides qui ne tiennent compte ni des lois de la syntaxe, ni du génie de la langue, mais qui permettent d'exprimer énergiquement autant de sentiments et d'idées que de mots. C'est ainsi que, dans la lettre xxv, elle s'arrête et se reprend au moment où son vœu le plus cher, celui de la conversion de Nanette Calas, vient de lui échapper encore une fois : « Je me tais et mets le doigt sur la bouche, et non sur le cœur, qui

1. Ch. Coquerel, *Histoire des Églises du Désert*, t. II, p. 316.

*sera toujours le même, en desirs des plus vifs.* » Ce même style se retrouve dans sa lettre à M. d'Auriac, où en parlant de Nanette, placée dans son couvent par lettre de cachet, elle ajoute : *La religion en était l'objet, que nous n'avons pu remplir; c'est à Dieu seul qu'il appartient.*

Sur ce sujet qui lui tenait plus à cœur que tout autre, elle ne tarit point; et comme elle sait cependant que ses prières et ses exhortations restent stériles, comme elle se sent obligée, sur ce point délicat, à une réserve que lui commandent également la discrétion et la charité, il est curieux et touchant de la voir varier à l'infini ce thème toujours bref, mais toujours plein d'émotion et d'ardeur. Ailleurs, elle s'élève sans effort à une véritable éloquence, qui part du plus profond de son cœur; il en est ainsi de sa belle lettre (xxxiv) sur la mort du fils aîné de Nanette; elle a ces accents émus, de ton convaincu et plein de sympathie, cette élévation chrétienne, qui seuls consolent. Habituellement, rien n'est plus aimable et même plus gai que le ton des lettres de la religieuse septuagénaire. Elle avait en effet soixante-dix ans accomplis lorsqu'elle écrivait joyeusement à sa jeune amie : *Le noir de la vieillesse est encore loin de moy, je n'iray pas le chercher.* (L. xxxii.)

Dans l'abandon charmant de ces causeries intimes, elle a par moments le tort de parler le jargon puéril du couvent; et sa parole, d'ordinaire si vive, si nette, prend alors une afféterie qui choque nos habitudes, mais qui est toute dans le mot, jamais dans la phrase. On aimerait mieux qu'elle écrivît *un fils et une fille* au lieu d'un *poupon et d'une toutoune*; une jeune dame et non une *damote*; mais j'ai scrupuleusement respecté le style, même dans ces mignardises qui, après tout, sont ici le goût du terroir.

Elle ne cherche pas un instant le mot le plus convenable quand elle en a trouvé un, énergique et précis,

qui dit bien ce qu'elle veut dire ; son langage n'est pas celui d'une prude, et il y a dans ses lettres telle expression que nous aurions hésité à reproduire, si nous ne nous étions imposé la règle invariable de n'y rien changer, et d'en maintenir jusqu'à l'orthographe tantôt fautive et tantôt vieillie. Nous le devons par un double motif : cette correspondance est pour nous un appendice au procès des Calas, ou du moins un témoignage rendu à cette famille tant calomniée, témoignage contemporain et très-désintéressé ; c'est en même temps une œuvre littéraire trop naïve, trop originale, pour ne pas être conservée dans sa pleine intégrité.

La sœur Fraisse mérite une place à la suite de quelques femmes d'élite, auteurs sans le vouloir, dont les lettres vives et naturelles sont un des ornements de notre littérature et comptent parmi les créations les plus attrayantes de l'esprit français<sup>1</sup>.

1. Nous devons faire remarquer qu'outre la lettre à M. d'Auriac, qui a été reproduite plus d'une fois, celle adressée à Cazeing a paru en 1817 dans les *Annales protestantes*, p. 152. C'est la seule dont l'original ne soit pas en notre possession. Grimm a publié, dans sa *Correspondance littéraire*, la lettre XX. La V<sup>e</sup> et la XI<sup>e</sup> lettre ne sont pas de la sœur Fraisse mais de la supérieure de son couvent, la mère d'Hunaud ; nous avons cru devoir ne pas les séparer de celles d'Anne-Julie : le même esprit de charité et de justice y règne. A ce titre, elles méritaient d'être publiées.

Le cachet dont ces lettres portent l'empreinte nous paraît être celui du couvent ; il porte un cœur surmonté d'une croix et entouré d'une couronne d'épines.

La publication que nous avons faite de cette correspondance dépend de M. l'abbé Salvan. « Il y a dans ses lettres, dit-il, une infinité de détails que peut expliquer son *excessive* tendresse pour Nanette, mais que sa piété aurait désavoués, si elle eût pu prévoir que ces lettres confidentielles dussent voir le jour, grâce à l'indiscrete complaisance d'un ministre du saint Évangile. » (P. 142.)

## LETTRES DE LA SŒUR ANNE-JULIE FRAISSE

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### I

*A Monsieur  
Monsieur Castanier d'Auriac  
Conseiller d'État, rue neuve des Capucines  
à Paris. .*

VIVE JÉSUS

†

De notre Monastère de Toulouse, le 24 décembre 1762.

Je ne pretends pas, Monsieur, vous instruire et vous raconter . tragique histoire de l'infortunée famille de Calas, mais vous .moigner le plaisir sensible que j'auray si vous leur etes favo- .ble et que vous contribuiez par votre suffrage à les rehabiliter. .ous avons eû sept mois dans notre maison une de ces demoi- .elles par lettre de cachet. La Religion en étoit l'objet, que nous 'avons peu remplir : c'est à Dieu seul qu'il appartient. A cela .rès, elle a gagné l'amitié et l'estime de notre Communauté par .es excellentes qualités. Nous n'avons eû qu'à regretter que tant .le vertus dont elle est remplie ne puissent lui servir que pour .cette vie. On m'avoit chargée d'elle ; j'y étois tous les jours et .je n'ai eu jamais le plus léger mecontentement ; elle ne merite .que des éloges. Nous avons eû occasion de connoître ce qui reste .de cette famille ; leur bon caractère nous assure de leur innocence. .Il est bien dezirable qu'elle soit reconnue et justifiée. Perme- .tez-moi de vous assurer de tous les souhaits heureux que je .forme pour vous dans la nouvelle année que nous allons com- .mencer. Je prie le Seigneur qu'il remplisse tous les désirs de

votre cœur. Je suis, avec l'attachement le plus sincère, Monsieur, —  
votre tres-humble obéissante servante.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
De la V. Ste M. D. S. B. <sup>1</sup>.

## II

A MONSIEUR CAZEING

VIVE JÉSUS

†

De notre Monastère de Toulouse ce 24 janv. 1763.

Vous m'avez bien devinée, Monsieur, lorsque vous n'avez poi-  
douté du plaisir que j'ai eu de la délivrance de mademoisel-  
Nanete; je n'aurois cédé à personne de lui en donner la no-  
velle; vous jugez combien elle en fut transportée. Je ne désa-  
voue pas un contraste en moi-même : ce qui le causoit ne seroit  
pas de votre goût; là-dessus nous ne saurions être d'accord. Elle  
s'est conduite dans notre maison tout au mieux, polie, sage, mo-  
deste, discrète et prudente. Je l'ai connue remplie de mérite et  
des qualités les plus désirables. Je n'ai rien négligé pour lui  
adoucir la captivité; point de tracasserie ni de gêne. Il nous pa-  
raît, par tous les discours depuis sa sortie, qu'elle est aussi con-  
tente de nous que nous l'avons été d'elle. Ses affaires vont au  
mieux. Je lui ai donné une lettre pour M. Dauriac, mon cou-  
sin germain, président au grand conseil. Elle m'apprendra sans  
doute l'usage qu'elle en a fait. A l'égard des commissions que  
notre sœur économe a pris la liberté de vous donner, etc.

## III

POUR MADEMOISELLE NANETE CALAS.

† VIVE JÉSUS

De notre monastère de Toulouse ce 2 février 1763.

Je n'avois pas attendu, ma chère Nanete, au moment de rece-  
voir votre letre, à m'informer de vos nouvelles. Je savois votr

1. *De la Visitation Sainte-Marie : Dieu soit béni !*

voyage heureux, mais j'étois impatiente de tout le reste. Je suis en colere contre votre rapporteur ; c'est bien mal prendre son temps. Il faut esperer qu'il fera mieux les choses lors qu'il sera question de vos interets. Vous ne me dites rien de votre entrevue avec la chère mère ; ie ne doute point qu'elle n'ait été tendre et douloureuse. Votre cœur rempli de sentiments en a sans doute éprouvé dans ce moment tout ce que ie vous en connois capable, et c'est tout dire ; ie vous prie m'y réserver quelque part. Vous en avez beaucoup dans le mien. L'espace des lieux, les diférances entre nous et l'absance ne sauroient efacer les impressions que vos aimables qualités du cœur et de l'esprit ont fait dans le cœur de celle qui vous est toute dévouée. Si nous pouvions vous faire plaisir et que vous ayés besoin de quelques sollicitations, nous sommes toutes a votre service. Nous parlons souvant de vous et toujours avec les éloges que vous mérités, et nous avouons le desir de vous revoir. Plut au ciel que ce fut parmi nous ! Vous y seriez recue avec des transports, et vous nous avés asés aperçues pour savoir que ces sentimens vous sont uniquement consacrés.

J'avais oublié de vous prévenir sur l'abor glacé de M. d'Auriac, afin d'éviter que vous le prissiés pour vous. Je suis tres contente qu'il vous ait recue avec la bonté que vous mérités et que merite votre triste situation. Son air froid et serieux est dans son caractère ; si vous avés a le revoir, n'en soyés point étonnée ; c'est dans luy et non pour vous.

Notre sœur Violet vous embrasse tendrement, de même que notre sœur de Ponsan ; elles vous aiment de tout leur cœur. Vos deux lettres ont été lues a toutes ; chaqu'une, a la récréation, les vouloit entendre. Enfin, ma chère Nanete, vous avés gagné le cœur et l'estime de nous toutes. Je vous prie d'assurer Madame votre mère et votre chère sœur de tous nos sentiments d'estime et d'affection. Ne nous laisés pas ignorer la décision de vos affaires. N'oubliez rien à m'instruire de ce qui vous interesse. Si ie ne vous connoissois ie vous soubsonerois de ne vouloir point de nos lettres : vous ne me dites rien de l'adresse. Monsieur Francés<sup>1</sup> aura la bonté de les envoyer ; nous en serions bien en peine. Le cérémonial de la votre me déplaît ; moins de facons et plus de detail de ce qui vous regarde. Adieu, ma chère Nanete ; ie vous aimerai toujours fort tendrement. C'est dans ces sentiments que je suis votre tres humble obéissante servante, sœur Anne Julie

FRAISSE de la v. ste.

M. D. s. b.

1. Un négociant de Toulouse avec lequel Jean Calas avait eu depuis longtemps des relations d'affaires et d'amitié.



## IV

*A Mademoiselle  
Mademoiselle anne calas  
chés monsieur dumas rue neuve  
Saint eustache. A paris<sup>1</sup>.*

† VIVE JÉSUS

De notre monastere de Toulouse ce 5 avril 1763.

Me soubsoneriés vous d'indiférence, ma chère Nanete, par le retard de repondre a votre charmante letre du 13<sup>e</sup> mars? Peut-etre avés vous deviné que nous n'écrivons dans le careme, que pour l'absolu nécessaire. Voyez mon exactitude : au premier courrier ie n'ay qu'à suivre mon cœur pour m'entretenir avec vous et vous feliciter de l'heureux commencement de votre cruële afaire. Je repasse dans mon esprit tout ce qu'il faut pour la conclusion il y a bien des choses encore : l'apport des charges, information raison de l'arrêt; nos gens ne se preseront pas; puis l'examen et le jugement. Je suis impatiente, comme Nanete l'étoit quelquefois, en elle meme, a basse et douce voix. Je voudrois tout savoir à la fois; ie suis pourtant bien tranquille, persuadée que vous aurés du bon.

Et puis, tout jugé, ou habiterés vous? N'y aura-t-il point quelque reste d'affaires qui vous ramènera au moins en passant dans cette ville? J'ay peine à consentir de ne plus vous revoir; ma tendresse souffre des aparances, peut-etre trop certaines, de cette privation.

Je souaitte bien que M. Dauriac soit au jugement, suposé qu'il vous soit favorable, comme je l'espere. Il a reputation de bonne tête; son avis est écouté.

M. Francés est tres exact a nous donner les assurances de votre souvenir, ie ne lui pardonnerois pas de nous les laisser ignorer. Qu'ay-ie tant fait pour vous, qui puisse si fort exiter votre reconnaissance? Vous contés sans doute la bonne volonté pour les efets; rien n'est perdu dans vn cœur si bien placé que celui de ma chère Nanete, que j'aimeray toujours tendrement. Le bon Dieu le sait et tout ce que je luy dis pour elle. Ha, si jamais j'aprans qu'en m'écoutant il m'a exaucée, ie diray comme Simeon : Sei-

1. Cette adresse est aussi celle des lettres suivantes.

gneur, laissés aler mon ame en paix, puisque ie vois ce que j'ay tant désiré.

Nos cheres sœurs vous en disent de meme et vous font mille amitiés. Des qu'elles me savent une de vos letres, elles en veulent savoir quelque chose, et ie veux avoir toujours ce qui vous interesse. Aprenés moi tout ce qui surviendra de nouveau. Mes tendres compliments, ie vous prie, à Madame votre Mère. Je la remercie de son souvenir. Il me semble que si ie la voyais, nous serions bonnes amies. Vne embrassade à la chere sœur. Votre frère Louis n'est plus venu depuis votre sortie. La sœur Vialet vous salue.

Mademoiselle Nautonnier est d'accort avec nous, qu'elle n'est pas faite pour etre religieuse, elle attend une autre lettre de cachet pour un couvant de Castres ; Vous la connoissés <sup>1</sup>. Je finis, ma chere petite amie, pour faire place a notre mere. Je suis et seray toujours toute a vous.

Sœur Anne Julie D. s. b.

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V

LA MÈRE D'HUNAUD A MADEMOISELLE ANNE CALAS.

(Sur la même feuille).

Je ne saurai pas vous aussi bien dire que notre Sœur De Fraisse tout ce que je pense et que je sens pour vous, Mademoiselle. Si vous pouviés voir dans mon cœur, vous y trouveriés des sentiments tendres et de vifs desirs pour tout ce qui vous interesse. Je me rejouis du bon commencement de vos tristes affaires, mais j'ai peine à prendre patience de la lenteur de vos juges. Je me flatte que ce n'est que pour mieux faire ; je le desire de tout mon cœur.

Donnez nous en des nouvelles, et de votre santé, que la multitude (et la qualité<sup>2</sup>) de vos occupations peuvent altérer ; il faut la ménager.

Toutes nos sœurs, qui vous aiment toujours, pensent souvent

1. Voir sur Mlle de Nautonnier la note 32 à la fin du volume.

2. La mère Anne d'Hunaud a effacé les mots *et la qualité* ; elle a craint sans doute que cette vague allusion à tout ce qu'avaient de pénible les sollicitations dont s'occupaient à Paris Mme Calas et ses filles, ne leur fût point agréable. Cette attention délicate à éviter, en un sujet si douloureux, la moindre rudesse de langage, fait honneur à la supérieure.

a vous et prie Dieu qu'il vous accorde toutes les grâces qui vous sont nécessaires pour être véritablement heureuse dans le tems et dans l'éternité. Je vous demande toujours quelque part dans votre amitié ; vous la devez à celle que j'ai perdue. Je serai toute ma vie bien tendrement, Mademoiselle, votre très humble et très obéissante servante.

Sœur Marie Anne D'HUNAUD  
de la visitation de Ste Marie D. s. b.

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## VI

### † VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de Toulouse ce 13<sup>e</sup> juin 1763.

Faut-il donc, ma chère Nanete, faire le sacrifice de vos nouvelles ? Depuis le commencement du carême je vous ignore. Votre santé, vos affaires, vos contentemens ou vos déplaisirs, m'intéresse. Je voudrais tout savoir, pouvoir lire dans votre cœur tous vos mouvemens, sans oublier ceux de l'esprit. Vous êtes bien dans le mien, je vous assure.

Je profite du départ de Monsieur votre frère qui dit devoir partir demain par la messagerie. Je dis *qui dit* ; la confiance dépend point de soy, vous savez que j'en ay pas de reste et j'en ay bien voulu avoir la bonté de me le passer.

Toutes nos religieuses vous embrassent et vous font mille amitiés. Nous parlons souvent de vous sur le ton qui vous est cher. Mademoiselle Nautonier est à Castres. On dit qu'elle va se marier, si elle ne l'est déjà. Pauvres enfans, que je vous plaie qu'en pense Nanette ? seront-ils bien rangés, bien peignés ? qu'elle maison luisante !

Votre frère <sup>1</sup> me presse si fort que malgré moy il me faut faire. Notre Supérieure me charge de vous assurer de son souvenir et de son amitié. Vous ne doutez pas sans doute de celle que je vous ay vouée. Adieu, ma chère petite amie, je suis toute à vous.

de tout le cœur Sœur Anne Julie  
FRAISSE de la V. Sainte M. D. s. b.

1. Louis Calas.

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## VII

## † VIVE JESUS

De ntre monastère de toulouse ce 3<sup>e</sup> août 1763.

Nous sommes toutes les deux coupables, ma chère Nanete, de jugements contre le prochain. Malheureusement les miens ne sont que trop vrais ; mais les vôtres sont faux. Je ne dis pas injustes ; les aparances vous trompent. Vous croyés sans doute que je ne vous ai point écrit ; mais voicy mon histoire. Monsieur votre frere <sup>1</sup>, en qui vous savés, je n'ay jamais eu confiance, vint il y a près de deux mois nous avertir qu'il partoît le lendemain pour Paris. Sans vouloir jurer du vray, je ne voulus pas perdre l'occasion de vous écrire sans vous faire des fraix. Je vous écrivis, fort pressée, seulement pour vous assurer de toute ma tendresse. Mais la supérieure fit bien plus ; elle luy remit des lettres de conséquence pour Monsieur son frere qui est a Paris et pour nos religieuses afin de les avertir du départ d'un quelqu'un qui devoit se charger pour nous de bien des paquets. Vendredi dernier mademoiselle Gardelle vint me voir ; je luy fis vos complimens et que vous me demandiés de ses nouvelles, que votre lettre s'étant croisée avec celle que j'avois donnée à Monsieur votre frere, j'avois conté qu'il vous en donneroit et que j'attendois pour vous répondre, d'être sure de certaines petites nouvelles que je voulois vous donner. Elle me repondit que je contoïs bien faux, qu'il n'etoit parti que depuis quelques jourset la procédure aussi, quoy qu'il nous eut assuré depuis deux mois qu'elle etoit à Paris. J'attendois avec toutes les impatiences imaginables d'en aprandre quelque chose. Je vous avoüe que si je m'étais trouvée dans ce moment vis à vis de luy, je luy aurois dit son fait. Il devoit nous rendre les lettres, puisque son depart etoit si fort retardé.

Ainsi, ma chère Nanete, ne croyés point que je vous ay oubliée. Vous m'etes toujours presente, mon cœur vous rapele toujours à l'esprit. Il est vray, je vous l'avoüe, vous etes toujours tout ce qui m'est le plus cher. Dans quelle situation etes vous ! Comment vont les choses ? Qu'esperés vous ? que craignés vous ? que projetés vous ? tout m'interesse. Parlés moy bien de vous quand vous m'écrirés : Ne pensés point au cout ; c'est a moy d'y penser pour vous, sans quoy je vous ecrirois tres souvent.

Comme je reste persuadée que votre frere n'arrivera point à Paris, vous vouliez des nouvelles de Gardelle ; elle a accouché d'un enfant mort, et mort depuis trois mois. C'est inimaginable.

1. Louis;

Elle étoit groce de quatre mois; étant a Montauban, elle se trou\_\_\_\_\_bla de voir vn cabriolet ou son mari, sa sœur étoient et qui fi\_\_\_\_\_it renverse par le cheval qui prit la fougue. Depuis elle ne sent \_\_\_\_\_it plus son enfant se remuer; elle ne grocit plus et trois mois apr\_\_\_\_\_s elle en a accouché, de la taille de quatre mois. Elle se por\_\_\_\_\_te bien. Mlle de Grave est mariée, depuis vn mois avec M. de Tr\_\_\_\_\_ville, à Castelnau-dary, homme de condition, huit mil livres c\_\_\_\_\_e rente; on luy a donné quarante mil livres. Elle vint nous vo \_\_\_\_\_ir dimanche. Je la croy groce. Elle est toujours aimable et nous e \_\_\_\_\_st fort attaché. La charmante Nautonier ne nous a jamais écri \_\_\_\_\_t, mais elle a fait l'effort de prier sa tante de nous communiqu\_\_\_\_\_er son mariage avec M. Villeneuve. Je n'ay pu savoir ou il habit \_\_\_\_\_e, ni si elle a encore epousé. Dans ma dernière lettre, que vous \_\_\_\_\_e recevrés pas sans doute <sup>1</sup>, ie vous faisois mes lamentations s\_\_\_\_\_ur ses pauvres enfants.

Dans notre parlement tout commence d'aler au mieux en fave\_\_\_\_\_ur de M. le premier présidant. Après un train afreux contre luy, l \_\_\_\_\_es esprits s'apaisent; on prend d'autres idées. Je say que vous vo\_\_\_\_\_us y intéresés. Je ne say plus nouvelles à vous donner, mais bien \_\_\_\_\_à vous demander des vôtres. Notre mere vous fait mille amitiés \_\_\_\_\_; notre sœur de Ponsan, Violet et toute la communauté.

Adieu ma chere petite amie. Aimés bien le bon Dieu, priés \_\_\_\_\_le de vous éclairer de la vraye lumiere. Soyés toute à luy. Il n'y \_\_\_\_\_a que luy seul qui puisse nous rendre heureux. Je suis et seray toujours toute à vous.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.  
mes tendres compliments, ie vous prie, à Mme votre mere et sœur.

## VIII

### † VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de Toulouse, ce 26 oct. 1763.

Voicy bien du temps, ma chere Nanete, que je n'ay eu de vos nouvelles, ni vous des mienes. Je voudrais bien pouvoir me flatter de ce dont ie puis vous assurer à votre égard, que l'oubli ni l'indiferance, n'y a nulle part. Vous êtes toujours dans mon cœur et jusqu'à mon dernier soupir, ie ne cesseray de demender a Dieu votre salut, avec autant d'ardeur que le mien. Luy seul sait mes desirs et mes soupirs. Il faut briser a tout ce que je pourrais vous en dire. C'est un article qui m'atendrit jusqu'aux larmes.

1. C'est la précédente.

J'ay vu ces jours cy M. Gardels, sa fame et madame Guay. Ils m'ont dit que madame votre mere avait obtenu 700 fr. de pension. Je vous prie de luy temoigner combien j'en ay du plaisir ; et vous 2000 livres. J'esperais qu'il vous en serait reconnu davantage, persuadée que les ventes de vos efets allaient bien plus loin. Cependant vous ayant été accordé, ce que vous autres avés demendé, c'est vn préjugé favorable pour tout le reste. J'espere qu'on vous rendra bonne justice.

Des que vous aurés besoin d'une letre pour M. Dauriac dont vous me parliés dans votre derniere, ecrivés moy tout ce que vous voulés que ie dise. Vous la recevrés courier par courier, et dites moy si ie dois vous l'adresser, ou a luy directement. Je ne say si la disgrâce de son beau pere le chancelier, peut porter sur luy. Vous etes en lieu de le savoir. Je crains ausi que dans cette saison sa goutte ne luy permete pas d'exercer, mais en tout cas, vous me trouverés toujours disposée à tout ce que vous voudrés. Je ne puis avoir de plus grand plaisir que de vous en faire.

Ha ! si ie pouvois vous revoir sous ma patte qui n'est pas assonante, ie ne perdrois aucune occasion de vous prouver ma tendresse. Si vous voyés M. votre frere, donnés luy la nouvelle de la mort de l'abbé Durand, vne fièvre maligne l'a emporté dans ses sept jours. (Il est mort en saint comme il avait reçu <sup>1</sup>.)

J'ay encore des nouveaux mariages à vous aprandre, dans le même gout des derniers. Nous avons eu dans la maison un mois Mlle Ville, sœur et jumele de notre Sr Marie Melanie, qui vous aprenoit les mitenes. Elle étoit venue faire une retraite pour se consulter sur vn choix d'etat. Elle ce marie ce mois cy. Nous en avons une autre, peut être de votre connaissance, Mlle Opiats, marchand au port, grande dévote <sup>2</sup>. Elle est sortie. Je ne say pas si elle conclura comme les autres. Voyés le tort que Nanete a eu de n'avoir pas dit : ie veux être religieuse. Je croy que dans votre ville on parle de l'aventure de notre parlement. Elle est remarquable et unique. Depuis son établissement, le président Belloc est mort d'apoplexie. Il parut une lettre au nom de son frere à M. le Commandant pr luy demander permission qu'il put sortir des arrets pr aller au tombeau. La reponce fut qu'il le permettoit pour une foix seulement. Il paroît tous les jours des ecrits suposés asses amusans. Le Comendant s'est logé a Lalande dans un vieux chateau de M. Nicole et il n'est visitté de personne.

1. Les mots que nous avons placés entre parenthèses sont biffés.

2. C'est-à-dire *Mlle Opiats, grande dévote*, dont le père étoit marchand établi auprès d'un des ports de la Garonne à Toulouse, tels que le port Garaud, le port de la Daurade, le port Saint-Pierre.

*(Le reste de la page est tombé de vétusté, excepté le post-scriptum-suivant) :*

Il vous sera peut être utile de savoir que M. Duroux le père <sup>1</sup> est tombé d'apoplexie à sa campagne; il n'étoit pas mort hier-matin, ie n'en say point de nouvelles depuis.

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## IX

### + VIVE JÉSUS

De ntre monastère de toulouse ce 4<sup>e</sup> janvier 1764.

Vous m'aurés sans doute pardonnée, ma chere petite amie, des soupçons que ma tendresse avoit fait naître. Votre aimable lettre a tranquillisé mes alarmes. Elle fut luë de toute la communauté et chaqu'une fit le panegerique de votre bon cœur et des sentiments qui sont nés avec vous. Mon Dieu! seroit-il possible que de si belles qualités.... ie ne dis rien de plus. M. de Mongasin qui a eu occasion de vous voir ne peut se taire de toutes vos politesses et tout ce que vous luy dites d'obligeant sur notre sœur Thérèse Félice. Elle vous en remercie et vous fait mille et mille compliments.

Que ne puis-je, ma chere amie, vous exprimer tous les souhaits que ie forme pour vous dans cette nouvelle année! Vous les pénétrés, je desire que vous les sentiés. Mon cœur vous est assés connu pour ne pas douter de leur sincérité et de leur étendue. J'espere qu'elle vous sera heureuse pour une conclusion favorable a votre tres malheureuse affaire. Ne diferés pas un seul instant a m'en faire part, et, par la suite, du parti que vous autres prendrés de rester a Paris, ou l'endroit que vous choisirés. Vous le savés, ie vous l'ay dit souvent : ie suis malheureuse de vous avoir connuë. Tout en moy s'intéresse à votre sort. Quel sera-t-il? pas si heureux que ie le desire. J'écris a M. Dauriac, aussi vivement que vous pouvés souhaitter. Je say qu'il a la goute; peut être ce sera un obstacle a pouvoir vous être utile.

Ie suis bien sensible au souvenir que vous avés de ma famille. Ma sœur <sup>2</sup>, monsieur de Bertier, se portent très bien; ma nièce vit, c'est tout; elle est toujours aux soins de M. Sol <sup>3</sup>. Je l'ay vu,

1. Père du procureur qui signa la brochure de La Salle et qui fut suspendu trois mois de ses fonctions pour s'être inscrit en faux, au nom des Calas, contre certains actes de David de Beaudrigue.

2. Mme de Bertier.

3. Voir sur le docteur Sol la note 20 à la fin du volume.

et Mme Vialet et Gardelle. Je leur ay fait vos complimens; les uns et les autres vous remercient et vous font mille souhaits, aussi bien que notre sœur de Ville. Sa sœur est toujours Mademoiselle; deux mariages ont manqué.

Notre mere superieure et toutes nos sœurs sont tres sensibles à vos bontes; elles vous aiment de tout leur cœur. M. Canpan ne vient point; s'il retarde, ie m'informerai ou il habite pour le reveiller. Je vous prie de faire mille et mille complimens de ma part et une embrassade à Mme votre mere et a chere Rosete.

Suis avec les sentiments les plus tendres, et d'un cœur qui vous est tout dévoué, votre tres humble servante

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

Je vous prie, lors que vous m'écrirés de ne pas négliger, comme vous faites, de me donner des nouvelles de votre santé. Et la poitrine, que fait-elle?

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## X

### † VIVE JESUS

De ntre monastère de toulouse ce 14<sup>e</sup> mars 1764.

Ne croyés pas, ma chere petite amie, que l'oubli ait part au retard de ma réponce. Je ne puis et ne suis capable a votre egard que des sentimens les plus tendres. Vos lettres me donnent toujours un plaisir nouveau. Votre derniere a bien couru en premier lieu tous nos ronds, a la recreation. Chacune s'empresse de vos nouvelles; elles vous font toutes mille compliments, notre Superieure a la tête. Notre Sœur de Mongasin et Sœur Vialet voudroient vous embrasser; ie ne leur cederois pas, si ie pouvois avoir un jour cette consolation; ie m'en prendrois bien.

Je remis votre lettre à M. Sol pour decouvrir M. Canpan. Tous les Gardele, Vialets, Mme Gay, et les autres l'ont vuë jusqu'a ma sœur qui seule pretend connoitre ce Canpan de Castres. Il n'est point a Toulouse. Voyés a qui nous devons remettre les fleurs, ou s'il n'en est plus question. Toutes vos connoissances et M. Sol vous saluent. Je leur ai fait grand plaisir de leur donner de vos nouvelles. Je suis bien fachée de celles que vous me donés de votre santé. Il se peut bien que les eaux de ce pays vous soient contraires; il y a des fontaines dont bien des personnes se servent, qui sont saines. Menagés vous, ne prodigués pas votre



santé; vous le devés a vous meme et aux personnes qui vous cherissent tendrement.

Ma chère Nanete, mon cœur et mon esprit est bien rempli de vous; il en est ocupé plus que vous ne croyés; Vn objet supérieur le fixe et vous rend toujours presente a moy. Je suis a present dans l'atente a tous les courriers des nouvelles de vos affaires. Elles m'interessent au point de me donner bien de l'inquietude. Si le jugement est retardé et que vous souhaittiés une autre letre pour M. Dauriac, vous n'avés qu'a dire : ie suis toute à vous. Point de paresse de plume, lorsqu'il est question de vous rendre servise. Je fairais, ou tenterais l'impossible pour ma chere petite amie. Mon Dieu! qu'il me taede de savoir votre sort! Quel qu'il soit, vous me serés toujours chere, et jusqu'à mon dernier soupir, le bon Dieu sait bien que ie ne vous oublieray devant luy. Adieu, ma chere amie, je suis pour toujours avec l'attachement le plus inviolable, votre très humble servante, Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

Mille et mille compliments a Mme votre mere et votre chere sœur. Je les remercie de leur souvenir. Elles ont bonne part dans le mien.

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## XI

LA MÈRE D'HUNAUD A M<sup>lle</sup> ANNE CALAS.

†

V. J.

De N. M. de Toulouse ce 31 mars 1764.

Vous nous donnés tant de témoignages de l'amitié que vous avés pour nous, Mademoiselle, que je m'adresse à vous avec beaucoup de confiance pour une petite affaire dont j'espere que vous tirerés bon parti. Il est question de nous faire paier seize Louis que nous avons prêtés à M. Francés. Il s'est engagé, dans le billet qu'il nous a fait, de nous paier dans tout ce mois-ci. Nous avons quelque souci sur son conte, n'aïant donné aucun signe de vie depuis son départ de Toulouse, ni a nous, ni a aucun de ses parents ni amis. On prétend qu'il est à Paris avec Mlle de Manse. Supposé qu'il y soit encore ou quelque part qu'il soit, si vous le pouvés, je vous conjure, Mademoiselle, de le presser de nous paier. Nous avons beaucoup pris sur nous pour lui rendre le service de lui pretter cet argent, qui nous est tres necessaire. Vous etes assés de nos amies pour que je vous dise en confiance que

nous avons été obligées d'emprunter. Vous sentés par là que M. Francés nous feroit grand tort de retarder à nous rendre ce qu'il nous doit. Il se parle beaucoup de lui; vous pouvés deviner ce qu'il s'en dit. Ses parents et amis le plaignent et le blâment. Je crains qu'il n'aura peut etre pas osé se presenter a vous et qu'il sera inutile que je vous prie de vous interesser pour nous procurer notre argent. Je suis bien convaincue que, si vous y pouvés quelque chose, vos bontés et votre amitié pour nous vous engagera a nous rendre ce service.

Pour moi, mademoiselle, je suis tres aise d'avoir cette occasion de vous renouveler les assurances de mon sincere attachement et de l'interet que je prens a tout ce qui vous regarde. Je suis bien impatiente sur la conclusion de vos affaires; je vous prie instamment de m'en donner des nouvelles. Vous etes toujours estimée et aimée de toute notre communauté. Nous parlons souvent de vous, et nous prions toujours beaucoup pour vous. Notre Sœur de Fraisse se porte assés bien, elle me charge de vous dire mille choses tendres. Vous connaissés ses sentiments pour vous. Les miens ne sont pas moins sinceres; rendés moi la justice d'en etre convaincue, et que je suis, mademoiselle, votre tres humble et tres obeissante servante, Sr Marie Anne d'HUNAUD, superieure

de la visitation Ste Marie. D. S. B.

Notre Sœur de Fraisse vient de recevoir votre aimable lettre que nous avons luë avec grand plaisir a notre recreation. Elle va ecrire a M. Doriac.

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## XII

### † VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 30 mai 1764.

J'atens a tous les couriers, ma chere et plus chere petite amie, des nouvelles de votre malheureuse afaire. Je m'informe; personne n'en sait mot. J'ay recrit a M. Dauriac, pas sitot que vous me demendiés dans votre derniere; mais pour le mieux. Voyant le jugement retardé jusqu'après paques, ie ne luy ecrivis que le mercredi saint pour que le souvenir touchat de plut pres le terme de l'afaire. Je vous diray meme que pour ne pas afaiblir ma sollicitation en les multipliant, ie me suis brouillée avec le sieur Fransés qui m'en demendoit pour sa belle. Obstinement ie l'ay refusé; ce sont des délicatesses que l'amitié inspire. Je puis si peu pour vous, ma chere Nanete, qu'il faut bien que je

laisse en valeur ce petit rien. Mon Dieu, que ne fairayie pas si les occasions egalaient ma bonne volonté pour tous vos interets.

C'est devant le Seigneur que ie m'occupe pour vous de ce qui vous rendrait vraiment heureuse. J'espere contre toute esperance et j'espereray jusqu'à mon dernier soupir. La puissance du Tres Haut est bien au dessus de nos resistences. Il faut tout esperer de ces moments precieux, réglés dans ses decrets eternels.

Ie ne suis point encore consolée de la perte que nous avons faite ce careme, de notre sœur Marie-Henriette Lapeirie, d'une ataque de colique, comme celle que vous lui aviés vue dans le tems que j'étois malade. On ne peut acuser le careme. Elle n'avoit jamais mangé maigre depuis ce temps. Sa colique la prit le jeudi de la semaine de la pasion et le samedi elle mourut. Nous l'avons fort regretée. C'étoit une fille d'un bon caractere qui n'avoit que trante deux ans. Les dames Notonier et de Grave sont au moment de leurs couches. La premiere a pris son logement au plus haut de sa maison et pleure volontiers lorsqu'elle voit du monde. C'est toujours la meme; l'eloge n'est pas pompeux. Notre superieure, sr Violet, sr Ponsan et toutes vous font mille amitiés. Nous ne vous oublierons jamais. Souvant on chante vos louanges. Ie pence qu'il en est de meme, partout ou l'on vous connoit.

Donnés moy de vos nouvelles en détail. Parlés moy de tout ce qui vous interesse, plus que de toute autre chose. Dites en plusieurs de ma part et mille amitiés à Mme votre mere, et chere Rosette. Je suis toujours avec l'attachement le plus tendre votre tres humble servante

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

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### XIII

† VIVE JESUS.

De ntre monastère de toulouse, ce 13 juin 1764.

Je suis si transportée de joye<sup>1</sup>, ma chere petite amie, que je ne say comme m'en m'expliquer. Lisés dans mon cœur; vous y trouverez tout ce qui est dans le votre. Je prands bonne part de tout ce qu'il sent. Vos interets, vos plaisirs, vos peines sont des biens et des meaux qui m'appartiennent autant qu'a vous. Il en

1. Le 4 juin, le Conseil avait cassé les arrêts des Capitouls et du Parlement de Toulouse.

sera toujours de meme jusqu'a mon dernier soupir. Soyés loin, ou près, vous me serés toujours presente. Lors que je suis devant Dieu, c'est alors que je luy dis bien des choses pour vous.

Lorsqu'on aura nommé le tribunal qui doit juger le fond de l'affaire, faites m'en part au plus tôt. Nous avons de nos religieuses presque dans toutes les villes du royaume ; nous pourrons peut estre vous procurer des connoissances et protections. Toujours empressées de vous estre utiles, disposés de ce qui depend de nous. Notre Mere Superieure vous assure du plaisir sensible de votre heureux succès. Elle vous fait mille et mille amitiés et remerciemens de vos soins à l'égard du Sieur Francés. Toutes nos religieuses vous felicitent ; j'ay repandu la nouvelle dans le moment. Mme de Treville est près de ses couches. Notre Mère lorsqu'elle lui écrira luy fera vos complimens.

Je vay écrire a M. Dauriac pour lui faire mes remerciemens et luy dire la reconnoissance que vous m'en témoignés. Il faut se menager tout le monde ; les occasions viennent, le moins qu'on y pense. J'enverray la bonne nouvelle aux personnes que vous me nommés. Dites bien des choses de ma part à Mme votre mere et chere sœur ; vous ne sauriés leur en dire au delà du vray. Dites moi, ma chere Nanete, si la suite de vos affaires, pour le recouvrement de vos biens, ne vous necesitera pas de venir un temps dans ce país. N'oubliez pas cet article lorsque vous m'écrirés pour m'apprendre le parlement qu'on aura nommé. Je suis et seray a jamais toute a vous

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

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## XIV

### + VIVE JESUS

De ntre monastère de toulouse ce 27 juin 1764.

Je viens, ma chère petite amie, de recevoir votre aimable lettre et j'apprens en même tems le depart de Janete pour Paris, qu'elle nous a dit estre demain. J'en profite avec empressement. Ce m'est un plaisir sensible que dans notre éloignement vous soyez persuadée de mes tendres sentiments. L'afoiblissement des temps n'auront jamais action sur eux.

Je vous felicite du tribunal ou votre affaire est évoquée ; on ne pouvoit rien faire de mieux a vos interets. Je ne trouve point mauvais ce que vous me répondés sur notre ville. Jugés, a pre-

sant que vous etes instruite de tous vos malheurs, et que mon attachement vous est connu, quelle etoit ma situation vis a vis de vous, les alarmes ou j'etois, et les precautions que nous prenions toutes pour qu'ils ne vous fussent pas connus. J'ay toujours empeché que les ecrits de Voltaire vous parvinssent. Il valait mieux que vous n'en connussiez que lors que vous seriez dans une autre situation.

Je comprends qu'a present vous n'aurez plus besoin de M. Dauriac; en cas, vous savés tout ce que ie vous suis. J'exige que dès la conclusion de votre affaire, que j'espere aler vite, vous m'en ferés part, et de la fixation de votre demeure qui sans doute sera a Paris. Vous le savés, ie veux etre instruite de tout ce qui vous interesse, et vous savoir hors de toute affaire. Notre Mère Superieure vous fait mille amitiés, aussi bien que toutes nos Sœurs. Elle vous prie de faire remettre la letre que Janete vous donnera a son adresse. Ce sont les mêmes que vous futes voir et qui nous ecrivirent qu'elles avoient vu une jeune et fort jolie dame qui nous etoit bien attachée.

Je suis tres obligée a madame votre mere et sœur de leurs sentimens; j'ose dire me les devoir par juste retour. Embrassés les pour moi, ie vous prie. Je suis, ma chere amie, avec la plus vive tendresse, votre tres humble obeissante servante Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE de la V. Ste

M. D. s. b.

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## XV

### † VIVE JESUS

De ntre monastère de toulouse ce 24<sup>e</sup> octobre 1764.

Vous devés sans doute, ma chere petite amie, me croire morte, enterrée, depuis bien du tems. Me voicy resucitée. Ma chere Nane a été malade, me disoit-elle, dans sa dernière lettre; ie l'ay été aussi à mon tour. Je n'ay jamais perdu le desir de vous renouveler les assurances de mon très tendre attachement. Je suis en peine et dans des inquiétudes terribles sur votre affaire. Nous en parlames beaucoup hier avec M. Sol; son discours me mit en perplexité. Il me dit qu'il ne craignoit point le jugement, qu'il le désiroit, bien persuadé que si l'affaire se juge, ce sera favorablement, mais ie crus apercevoir qu'il craignoit qu'elle ne seroit pas jugée. Tirés moy de peine sur cet article, donnés moy de vos nouvelles, j'en veux a fonds, de maman et de votre chere sœur. Je fais a toutes les deux mille et mille amitiés. Toutes nos

sœurs vous en font des plus affectueuses ; elles me demandent souvent de vos nouvelles ; elle vous aiment bien toujours.

Mademoiselle de Grave et Mademoiselle Nautonier, l'une et l'autre *Madame* dont ie ne me souviens du nom, ont vne conscience admirablement scrupuleuse : elles ont fait chacune une fille pour nous rendre dans la suite des temps ce qu'elles ont cru ne pouvoir faire. C'est bien faire les choses. Nous avons perdu la sœur de Catelan d'un accident d'apoplexie.

Il m'est inutile de vous repeter que si vous avés besoin de moy aupres de M. Dauriac, ie suis tout a votre service. Je ne pense pas que vous me fairiés le tort d'en douter. Que ne puis-je avoir occasion de satisfaire le desir de vous etre utile, et vous prouver par des efets l's sentimens de mon cœur ! Notre superieure vous assure de son tendre atachement. Je suis, ma chere amie, mais de tout le cœur, toute a vous.

Sr anne julie FRAISSE de la v.  
Ste M. D. s. b.

Avés vous vu notre premier president a Paris ? Il pouroit bien vous rendre service, luy qui a ete aux requetes.

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## XVI

### † VIVE JESUS

De ntre monastère de toulouse ce 12 décembre 1764.

J'ay reçu, ma chere petite amie, votre letre avec un plaisir toujours nouveau. Mon cœur est flaté de voir que le votre ne m'oublie pas. Nous voicy au terme ou vous esperés le jugement de vos affaires. Je me doute que je seray de mauvaise humeur jusqu'au moment ou ie vous sauray contente, hors d'embaras, et décidée sur l'habitation de vous trois<sup>1</sup>.

Au moment du jugement, je prévois bien d'aucupations. Je me contente que dans vne grande et belle feuille vous metiez : *Nous avons tout gagné. — Nanete Calas.* Et à votre loisir, vous m'en dirés tout. Je vous connais vive, sensible au dernier point, de l'honneur jusqu'au bout des ongles, pleine de sentimens, voila ma chere Nanete bien peinte au naturel. En consequence la santé paye pour tout, et ie ne suis point surprise de son déran-

• 1. Ici se trouvent les mots qui suivent ; ils sont peu lisibles et me paraissent inintelligibles : *Pour les chapeaux ce sont d'autres débrèchements.*

gemant; ce ne peut être autrement. J'espère qu'un jour, plus tranquille, dans un sort plus heureux, vous vous remètrés.

Je vous en souhaite un semblable à celui de Mlle Gaillard, que vous avés vue chés nous. Vous pouvés la rapeler : vous lui avés eu montré d'ouvrages<sup>1</sup>. Elle vient de se marier; n'ayant que seize ans et avec vingt cinq mille livres de rente, elle a épousé M. Treil receveur de Castres, qui n'a pas moins de quatorze mille livres de rente.

Notre Mère Supérieure vous embrasse de tout son cœur; toutes nos religieuses et Sr de Ponsan, Mongasin, l'infirmière, Violet vous assurent de toute leur tendresse. Je puis vous assurer que vous avés si bien captivé tous nos cœurs qu'il n'y en a pas une qui ne soit toute empressée de vos nouvelles. Jugés si au bon Dieu nous ne lui disons pas bien des choses pour vous. Le sage dit que la persévérance est la patience à attendre les momens de Dieu et la perfection de l'œuvre.... Il faut bien que ma chère petite amie me permette de respirer quelque fois<sup>2</sup>. Je pense actuellement qu'un quelqu'un qui ne nous conoitroit pas et qui verroit nos lettres, vous, jeune et jolie demoiselle protestante, et moy, vieille et laide religieuse, en seroit bien surpris. Je ris toute seule de cette pensée.

J'ai écrit à M. Dauriac. Je salut bien tendrement votre chère maman et sœur. Je ne suis pas en peine de quel cœur vous vous êtes servies mutuellement dans vos maladies. M. Sol et Violet, à qui j'ai fait vos complimens, vous assurent de leur sensibilité à votre souvenir et vous protestent de leur attachement. Vous ne doutés pas du mien. Il vous est dévoué jusqu'à mon dernier soupir. Je suis votre très humble obéissante servante sr anne julie

de la v. ste m. D. s. b.

J'oubliais de vous parler de ma santé comme vous souhaités. Quand je vous écrivis je sortois d'une maladie telle que j'eus avant votre sortie. A présent nous sommes toutes enrhumées, gripe ou la tête en baraquete (sic).

1. Phrase traduite mot à mot du patois languedocien, pour : vous lui avez enseigné des travaux d'aiguille.

2. Est-il nécessaire de dire que l'œuvre dont il s'agit d'attendre la perfection, et les choses que les religieuses demandent à Dieu, c'est la conversion de Nanette? En parler de temps en temps, même d'une façon détournée et discrète, c'est ce que la bonne sœur appelle *respirer quelquefois*.

## XVII

*A Mademoiselle  
Mademoiselle Anne Calas  
maison de monsieur Langloy  
Conseiller au Grand Conseil rue  
neuve Saint Eustache A Paris<sup>1</sup>.*

† VIVE JESUS

De notre Monastère de toulouse, ce 20 mars 1765.

Je commençois, Ma chere petite amie, de murmurer serieusement contre vous. Par le retard du distributeur des lettres, la votre ne me fut renduë que samedi ; et des la veille toute la ville publioit vos heureux succès. Enfin vous respirés ! Et j'en dis de meme par la joye de vos triomphes. J'espere que vous retablirés votre santé dans une situation tranquille qui vous fera jouir du fruit de vos travaux. Je vous connois ; Combien votre cœur a-t-il souffert ! quels déchirements ! quelle violence ! j'en ay bien pris ma bonne part. Dans votre séjour chez nous, je ne vous temoignois pas ce que je sentoies, mais mon cœur étoit toujours attendri sur vos malheurs.

Lors que vous serés un peu débarassée de toutes vos occupations, j'exige de votre amitié, et pour contenter la mienne, que vous me parliés de trois choses. Ou fixés vous votre demeure ? Esperés vous de rapeler quelque chose de vos biens ? Et vous, ma chere petite amie, vos aimables calités, votre merite personnel et votre sage modestie vous promettent-elles un etablissement convenable, l'honneur de la famille réparé, seul obstacle a ce dont vous pouviés vous flater ? Vous me trouverés peut être indiscrete, mais vous sentés bien que c'est le cœur qui parle et qui desire. Il me semble que vous possedés tout ce qui peut plaire a la creature. Je laisse à Dieu, et ie le prie, de faire en vous tout ce qui peut le contenter. Du reste, si vous me faites quelque confidence, je vous en jure le secret.

Notre Superieure et toute la comunaute vous assurent de la part sincere qu'elles prennent a l'heureux succès de cette terrible affaire. Elles vous embrassent et vous ayment toujours fort tendrement. Ie vous prie de temoigner a la chere maman et sœur tout ce que ie sens de leur contentement ; mais dites le leur bien-

1. Écrite après la réhabilitation des Calas, cette lettre porte cette nouvelle adresse, ainsi que les suivantes.



ce ne sera jamais a l'egal du vray. Mon Dieu ! si ie pouvois vo embrasser, ie le ferois bien tendrement. Adieu, mon cher cœ vous me serés toujours chere. S'il se presente quelque occasi ou ie puisse vous etre utile, ô de grand cœur ie seray a vo service. Mais que peut une religieuse ? Des prières au bon Di pour qu'il accomplisse en vous sa sainte volonté.

Je suis avec l'attachement le plus inviolable toute a vous.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE

de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

## XVIII

### † VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 17 avril 1765.

Je ne puis vous dire, ma chere petite amie, tout le plaisir d'o j'ay été saisie a la lecture de votre aimable letre. Si j'avais ap d'ailleurs ces aimables nouvelles, je ne vous aurois jamais pa donné de ne me les avoir point détaillées. Vous m'aviez fort bi rendu le dispositif de l'arret ; j'ay été bien aise de le voir da toutes ses circonstances. S'il est admirable il est encore pl juste ; l'équité demandait qu'on vous tirat de l'oppression où vo avez gemi plus de trois ans. Efacons s'il ait possible les malhe passés et sachés un peu vous livrer à la satisfaction d'etre parv nues au point qui étoit a present l'objet de vos desirs. Votre c ractaire, je le say, vous rend plus sensible aux afflictions qu'a plaisirs ; c'est pourquoy ie vous exhorte a vous élever au dess de vous-même ; et suivant le cours des evenemens, soyés co tente et joyeuse, dans un païs ou les tetes couronnées font à l'e vie d'essuyer vos larmes.

Notre parlement a fait, dit-on, des assemblées secrètes, pe examiner la légitimité des pouvoirs des requêtes, mais ils n'c rien trouvé a pouvoir les combattre. Ils disent qu'ils feront imp mer la procedure et la donneront au public pour leur justific tion. Je repons qu'ils s'en garderont bien. Je puis pourtant vo assurer que tout ce qui vous connoit s'est rejoui de vos trio phes. Notre superieure, toutes nos religieuses, en sont transpo tées et me chargent de vous le protester, surtout toutes cel que vous nommés. Vous êtes admirable et unique ; nous ne tre vons dans aucune de nos élèves de plusieurs années, les men souvenirs qui sont dans votre bon cœur, pour huit mois de : jour dans notre maison. Il est vray que vous avés gagné tou les cœurs. Durant plusieurs de nos récréations, il ne s'est pa

que de ma chere Nanette, dont chacune faisoit les éloges; ils étoient conclus par cet elan : Mon Dieu, quel dommage !...

Si le Roy fait quelque chose en votre faveur, ie veux le savoir; si vous pouvés fixer votre demeure à Paris, j'en seray fort aise; on est à portée de tout. Les parisiens aiment les gascons. Je m'attendais bien que n'ayant d'autre fonds que le magasin, rien n'étoit garanti.

Pour ma troisième question je n'en desespere pas; ie ne contoie point sur votre fortune, ie ne say que trop que vous n'en avés point; mais ie ne puis me persuader, que votre figure, vos raretés, ne vous valent plus que des sommes considérables en cas; et en cas, sans manquer au respect que nous devons à St Paul<sup>1</sup>, si l'aventure regarde un catolique, franchisés le pas; ie me chargerais bien d'en répondre à Dieu, et St Paul, bien loin de s'en fâcher, en sera très content. N'oubliez jamais que vous m'avez promis de me faire part des evenemens qui vous arriveront. Vous voyés, que ie me donne les airs de vous donner des conseils avant qu'ils me soyent demandés; tout est permis à l'amitié. Avec vous mon cœur pence tout haut. Je conte si fort sur la bonté et la solidité de votre esprit, que ie vous croy en garantie de participer aux damnables sistemes dont paris est infecté. Vous avés naturellement le cœur et l'esprit pieux; un petit rayon de la vray lumiere fairoit de vous une parfaite chretiene.

Vous avés été si bien recues à Versailles que ie ne doute point que si quelque chose vous y menait, vous ne reculeriés pas.

Il serait bien à souhaitter que si le vice chancelier parle au Roy, on se joignit à luy pour fortifier la demende. Si le chancelier n'étoit déplacé, je vous ofrirois mes services auprès de madame Dauriac sa fille. J'ay fait lire à M. Sol votre letre devant maniece de Bertier qui étoit avec luy. Elle vous en fait son compliment. M. Sol qui vous fait bien les siens s'est chargé des Vialets et Gardelle. Mille amitié de ma part à la chere maman et sœur et ne doutés pas que ie ne sois à jamais avec les sentimens les plus tendres, votre très-humble et affectionnée amie

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE

De la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

On me gronde fort serieusement et chacune veut être nommée à leur tour; Sr Vialet, Sr de Ponsan, Sr de Ville, de Mongasin, Marie-Louise, Marie Rose, Sr Caseirals, et Sr de Serres vous embrassent de tout leur cœur.

1. Allusion au chap. vii de la I<sup>re</sup> Éptre aux Corinthien v. 8 : Or, je dis à ceux qui ne sont point mariés et aux veuves a ' e r est bon de demeurer comme moi. Voy. aussi v, 25, 34, 38.

## XIX

## † VIVE JESUS

Me voicy résuscitée, Ma chere petite amie. J'ay tant de choses a vous dire que les pensées m'étoufent. Je viens d'être malade. Je m'informois toujours avec M. Sol s'il n'y avoit rien de nouveau dans votre position. J'ay receu en son temps la charmante nouvelle de la gratification du Roy, et votre presentation a la Reine, et tout ce qu'elle vous dit d'obligeant; et tous vos heureux avantages me saisissent comme s'ils m'appartenoient. Je ne sens pas plus sensiblement ce qui me touche que ce qui vous interesse. Mes plaisirs sur le changement de votre fortune ne sont modérés que par l'affliction de ne voir jamais luire un petit espoir de votre vray bonheur, qui ne peut consister que dans ce qui ne finit jamais; actuellement les larmes m'en viennent aux yeux, vous cherissant comme moy meme.

Je n'avais jamais regardé votre demeure chez M. Dumas comme suite de letre de cachet. Je nay pourtant pas oublié qu'elle vous fut signifié, mais ie regardois ce ceremonial sans consequence, et en liberté à Paris de vous loger ou il vous plairoit. J'ignore votre nouvelle adresse; je me serviray de la même.

Voyés, ma chere Nanete, comme le bonheur vous suit, a tous. Le voyage de M. votre frere dans cette illustre compagnie<sup>1</sup> n'est pas indifferent et prouve le non-deshonneur de vos malheurs passés. Ce sont mes petites observations, a part moy; lorsque ie m'interesse, ie suis comme les animaux de l'Apocalipse, qui avaient des yeux devant, et derriere.

Je ne suis point surprise de votre fixation à Paris. Ce seroit une ingratitude de quitter cette ville après tant de bienfaits. Je m'attens tous les jours a quelque brillante nouvelle sur vous, machere petite amie. Ne soyés point scrupuleuse a l'égard de St Paul. Si le cas étoit, si vous me laissiés ignorer une minute seulement cette douce idée dans laquelle mon esprit se promene, supposé qu'elle se réalise, ie ne vous le pardonerois jamais. La nouvelle de la gravure m'a divertie; ie la trouve charmante, ie voudrois bien la pouvoir voir, bien mieux encore l'original. Je suis quelque fois toute triste lorsque j'en vois l'implacable impossibilité.

Je me suis informee de ce que disent les messieurs du Parlement. A presant pas un mot. Aux premieres nouvelles du gain glorieux, ils carillonnerent beaucoup sur le droit, et le fait; les

1. Je n'ai pu découvrir avec quel personnage l'un des jeunes Calas vait voyagé.

messieurs des Requêtes ne pouvoient, disoient-ils, toucher a leur arret. On fit courir bien de faux bruits; mais c'est tout. A present ces Messieurs n'en parlent point; ils sont tous occupés de M. de Fitz-James<sup>1</sup>, des affaires de Rennes et de Pau, d'un grand projet de noblesse a venir pour les membres de leur corps, n'en voulant recevoir qui n'ait quatre generations. Ils sont en dispute entre eux sur ce fait.

Vous m'avez fait un plaisir des plus sensibles par les copies de Mrs des Requettes, et Vice-Chancelier<sup>2</sup>. Je les ay faites courrir de toutes mes forces. J'y ai trouvé une augmentation a ce que je savais, de 6000 liv. pour les fraix des voyages et procedures; 36 000 liv. ne sont pas indifférentes; et la gloire de les tenir de Sa Majesté, preuve d'innocence persecutée. Je me persuade que Jannete ne sortira point ses 3000 liv. de la manse commune et vivra avec vous autres sans discussion.

Notre Sœur Dhunaud est bien sensible a votre souvenir et toutes nos religieuses; elles vous cherissent tendrement; toutes vous embrassent. Notre Sœur Jaquete se sent trop honorée que vous vous rapeliés qu'elle existe et vous presente ses respects. Je ne manqueray pas de porter vos complimens aux Vialets, Gardels et Sol; il en sera le porteur, comptant de le voir aujourd'huy.

J'ay repondu fort exactement, ma chere amie, a tous les points qui vous interessent personnellement; c'est avant tout. Venons a ce qui nous regarde. J'ay ri de tout mon cœur avec notre ancienne petite mere. Vous etes charmante, admirable, unique dans votre espece! Comment avez vous gardé dans un petit coin de votre memoire, avec les choses prodigieuses qui vous ont occupée, notre election au terme juste? Je vous entens a merveille; j'ay souvent pénétré vos pensées sur cet article malgré votre discrétion. Vous alés croire que nous sommes devenues folles, lors que ie vous dirai la Supérieure, que ni vous, ni nous, n'avons jamais vue, mais a la veille de la voir. Pour notre justification ie vous dirai une grande histoire. La voicy en racourci: notre institut a été fondé a Annecy ville de la Savoye. L'Eveque est Eveque et Prince de Geneve. St François de Sales qui en étoit l'Eveque nous y etablit cette maison que nous y avons; nous la respectons grandement; c'est la source. Elles fournissent des Supérieures aux maisons de l'ordre qui en veulent. Il y en a une,

1. Dans cette lettre et quelques autres, il s'agit des *Édits bursaux* que le gouvernement força les Parlements à enregistrer et qui accablèrent le peuple de nouveaux impôts. Le duc de Fitz-James, commandant en Languedoc, envahit le palais avec ses troupes et fit enregistrer ces édits par la force.

2. Ce sont les lettres que nous avons reproduites plus haut, chap. *xxi*.

a nos religieuses de Montpellier, qui a gouverné six ans; elle devoit s'en retourner chez elle. Nous en avons eu fantaisie; c'est l'élection que nous avons faite le 23<sup>e</sup> de May. Je conte qu'elle arrivera a la fin de ce mois par tout le ceremonial qu'il a falu écrire a l'Eveque de Geneve qui est son superieur; il faut qu'il envoie sa permission. Ce sont des délais qui finiront bientôt; j'y suis tres interessee pour finir mes ocupations; il m'a falu écrire sans fin et me meler de tout, en qualité d'assistante. Voilà notre histoire. Vous en serés bien surprise; en tout cas, vous n'etes pas seule : on en parle partout.

Votre chere Maman et Sœur veulent bien recevoir les assurances de mes tendres sentimens. Vous ne doutés pas de ceux que j'ay pour vous et qui ne finiront qu'a mon dernier soupir. Je suis toute a vous. Votre tres humble obeisante servante Sr anne julie FRAISSE

de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

de toulouse, ce 12<sup>e</sup> juin 1765.

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## XX

### + VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 29 septembre 1765.

Votre letre, ma petite amie, m'a comblée de joye. J'étois au moment de vous écrire pour soulager l'affliction dont mon cœur étoit pénétré, au risque d'y mettre le comble par votre reponce. Je m'informois de vos nouvelles à ceux que j'en croyois instruits et l'on m'asura que vous etiez si fort dans les bonnes graces de l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre que ie m'attendois a tous momens d'aprandre un grand mariage, dans ce royaume. Je ne vous cache pas que la mort me serait plus douce et que j'en prandrois des regrets jusqu'à mon dernier soupir. Vous pensés sans doute : qu'est ce que cela fait? ie suis aussi ferme en France qu'en Angleterre. Ma chère Nanete, l'espérance est la derniere chose qui meurt en nous. Tout le tems que vous ne serez pas liée, ie pourray espérer que vous le soyés un jour avec un quelqu'un qui vous menera au point que ie désire. Grand Dieu, serait il possible que de si rares vertus et des qualités uniques dont le ciel vous a comblée, ne pussent vous servir que pour cette vie! Il faudra que le ciel soit d'airain, si nous n'en arrachons ce que nous désirons. N'y mettez pas obstacle, ma chere petite. Conservés l'intégrité de mœurs qui vous est si naturelle, ne perdés pas par la séduction du monde les heureuses dispositions de votre caractère. Où trouver un cœur comme le votre? Il est inimaginable que

vous concerviés le souvenir de ce qui est si loin de vous. Avec cette tendresse, ces attentions, ce désir de vous être utile, il est vrai que vous me devés quelque chose, par les sentimens de mon cœur qui vous est dévoué, bien plus que ie ne puis l'exprimer.

Ie ne suis point en retraite ; ie la commenceré le onze du mois prochain, jusqu'au vingt. J'ay une grace a vous demender ne me la refusés pas. Durant ces dix jours, dites à Dieu : Seigneur, exausés la s'il est utile à mon salut. Je ne vous demande, mon cher cœur, rien de plus. Et toute notre communauté qui est transportée de vos lettres, pas une ne vous oubliera ; et toutes à l'envi vous font mille tendres complimens, notre sœur de Hunaud, Violet. Je fairay vos complimens à toutes vos connoissances. Notre Supérieure grilleroit de vous voir sur tout ce que nous luy disons de vous. Elle vous remercie et vous assure de son amitié. Je vous prie d'assurer de la mienne la chère maman, et sœur ; ie suis bien sensible à leur souvenir.

Vous ne vous êtes point aperçue du vuide que vous laissés dans votre lettre, mais mon cœur le sant. Vous ne me dites pas un mot de vous, rien de votre santé, ni de vos plaisirs, ni de vos peines. Comment me traités vous, ma chere petite amie ? Croyés vous que je n'ay pas un cœur comme vous ? Ha si vous le voyés ce cœur vous vous y trouveriés bien empreinte. Je receveray avec grand plaisir l'estampe dont vous me parlés. J'y verray ma chere petite en figure, si ie ne puis la voir en réalité ; pourvu qu'il n'y ait point de nudités.

Ie prans grande part au nouveau bienfait du Roy en faveur de M. votre frère Louis. Oserai je vous demender s'il se soutient dans la Catolicité ? Ie crains la reponce ; mais ie suis persuadée que de quelle façon qu'il en soit c'est à votre bon cœur qu'il doit cette gratification malgré.... Je vous reconnois a ce trait : vous aurés employé vos protections en sa faveur. Vous voilà toute au long. Je vous connais jusqu'au fonds. N'oubliez pas que Dieu ne vous a donné un cœur que pour luy. Adieu ma très chere petite amie, que j'aime tres tendrement. Je suis et seray toujours toute à vous,

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE

De la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

Notre sœur de Hunaud se fâche de ce que ie ne vous dis pas qu'elle vous aime de tout son cœur.

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N'en parlons plus ; ces propos sont trop accablants ; ils échappent à la plénitude de mon cœur.

Que pouvés vous tant dire, ma chere petite, a vos amis pour nous les aquerir ? Que nous sommes des bonnes personnes, qui vous ont pas tracacée, et qui vous cherisent tendrement. Votre bonne conduite, et tout ce que vous merités, vous ont attiré de notre part tout ce dont vous nous loués. Vous etiés admirable ; vous voir, on vous auroit prise pour une postulante des plus modestes, et recueillies. Souvenés vous, lorsque vous passés nos dortoirs, les yeux baissés, sur le bout des pieds. C'est savoir tout bien faire.

Que dit Mlle votre sœur avec ses religieuses ? En est il comme vous avec les votres ? Faites luy bien mes amitiés sans oublier Madame votre mere. Hier on délivra l'estempe. Mon Dieu ! qu'il me tarde de revoir ma chere Nanete ! Nous saurons bien nous rapeler tout ce qui lui manquera ; physionomie et couleurs sont empreintes dans notre souvenir.

Notre Superieure et mere de Hunaud, de meme que la Sr Violet, Ponsan, Mongasin vous asurent de leur tendresse, et toute la communauté. J'ay fait vos complimens à Mmes Vialet, Gardelle et Sol et a Madame Gay que j'ay vue ce careme. Ils vous en font mille et mille. Si ie vous rendois tout ce dont on me charge, les uns et les autres, ie ne finirois. Permetés que ie profite des offres obligeans que vous me faites pour vne petite commission : ie souhaite quatre onces de soye tordue comme celles que vous m'avés vu travailler. Nous les apelons soye legis. Je veux que ces quatre onces me fassent quatre nuances en rouge, savoir un rouge brun, un ponceau, un seris et un couleur de rose clair. On ne peut aler si juste pour le poids ; un peu plus, un peu moins ne doit pas vous embarrasser. Nous faisons bientôt un envoié de fleurs a une marchande apelée Pastele, et nous luy donnerons ordre de vous payer. Vous voyés qu'au premier besoin ie vay sans façon. Au retour de votre part, ma chere Nanete ; si ie puis vous etre bonne a quelque chose ce seroit bien de tout le cœur. Je me flatte que vous n'en doutés pas. Ce seroit en vous une injustice horrible, etant toute a vous, mais bien tendrement.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

Ie ne me souviens pas si dans ma derniere ie vous disés la mort de Mlles Destelanes et sœur Catherine. Et ce careme, nous avons perdu d'une purimonie Sr Claude Julie. Nous l'avons bien regrettée ; son age, sa douceur, sa politesse nous la rendoit bien chere. Je vous fourniray a la premiere occasion une comodité franche pour mon petit paquet, en cas vous n'en conoisiés pas.

## XXIII

## VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de Toulouse ce 30<sup>e</sup> avril 1766.

Je receux samedi, ma chere petite amie, l'estempe si desirée. J'avois cru sotement que le courier la portoit. A letre vue, j'en-voyai à M. Lavaysse ; il m'a falu l'atendre jusqu'au 26<sup>e</sup>.

Vous etes ressemblante, il est vray ; ie vous ay tres bien reconnuë ; mais bien loin de vous flater, on ne vous a pas donné tout ce que vous avés, et nous avons ete toutes tres en colere, de ce qu'on a mieux representé votre groce Janete. La gravure est magnifique, tres expressive ; ie la garderay comme un gage de l'amitié de ma chere Nanete. Il me semble qu'elle est mon enfant ; je la cheris de meme ; assurés l'en de ma part.

J'ay fait part en son temps à M. Sol de tout ce que vous me disiés d'obligeant pour luy dans votre derniere. Je n'ay eu que trop ocasion de le voir durant huit jours ; il a presque habité chés nous, pour une petite enfant de M. le marquis de Puilaroque, qui au bout de tous ces soins, est alée au ciel. M. Sol envioit son sort. Je luy dis que le Bon Dieu nous faisoit de la peine de choisir notre maison pour nous enlever ces pauvres enfants qui nous sont confiés. Il me répondit que notre maison étoit le chemin du ciel. — Pourquoi donc ne vous faites vous pas frere visitandein ? — Je me ferois, dit-il, frere coupechoux, si j'étois aussi sur de ma part de paradis que cette petite qui y sera dans une heure.

Ne trouvés vous pas que cette conversation est charmante vis à vis un protestant ? Dieu soit béni ! il faut adorer ses deseins et s'y soumettre. Il m'en fache bien pourtant ! Ma chere petite amie a bien sa bonne part dans cette facherie.

Sol me dit a l'oreille que cette gravure vaudroit beaucoup dans l'Alemagne. J'en ai ete toute rejouie. Sans prejudice de tous les biens et graces spirituëles que ie vous souhaite, ie ne puis me defendre de vous souhaiter des avantages temporels. Mon cœur seroit en grande souffrance, si ie vous y savois.

Je vous parle a batons rompus, tout comme il me vient, de l'abondance du cœur. Mais n'oubliez pas que c'est une bonne vieille ; je ne veux pas que vous montriez mes letres sans avertir que la datte du siecle est celle de mon age. Nous marchons ensemble luy et moy d'un même pas, ne nous aretans jamais.

Mille amitiés de ma part a maman et la chere sœur. On l'a tres bien representee. Maman et vous, vous ressemblés avec les



differences de l'age. Adieu. ma chere Nanete que ie cheris toujours tendrement. Toute a vous.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE.  
De la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

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## XXIV

### + VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 6<sup>e</sup> aout 1766.

Vous ne doutés pas, Ma chere petite amie, que depuis avoir reçu votre magnifique presant, parfait dans toutes ses parties, ie n'ay été malade. Avec quelque accès de fièvre, j'en suis quitte. Mais après vous avoir remerciée, permetés mes reproches; vous m'avés souvant ofert de me faire mes petites commissions et me rendre service dans votre grande ville, le plus beau théâtre de la France; et vous m'obligés a n'oser plus respirer avec vous. Votre bon cœur me touche et le mien souffre de ne pouvoir vous procurer tout le bien que ie vous souhaite. Je vous en prie, rendés moy la liberté, en cas de besoin, d'avoir recours a vous sans que votre bourse en souffre, sans quoy ie ne puis profiter de votre bon gout. Vos soyes sont des plus belles; les couleurs, la nuance, la groceur, tout est au mieux.

Je garde avec grand soin votre estampe. Souvent ie la considère par le plaisir de quelque ressemblance. Il faut se contenter de la figure et faire un sacrifice éternel de l'original! Mon Dieu, avec quel plaisir l'embrasserai-je!

Brisons a ce discours frivole dont ie n'ay que la fumée. Dans les entredeux de vos lettres ie demande de vos nouvelles; personne ne m'en sait donner. Il me semble toujours qu'il y a quelque chose de nouveau a apprendre. Mes desirs me font illusion: ie me represente toujours un sort heureux a ma chere Nanete. Mon esprit s'en occupe. Mais si votre situation presente venoit a changer, ie ne vous pardonnerois jamais de me la laisser ignorer.

Il y a bien des choses qui me combleroit de joye sur ma chere petite amie. J'en parle souvant au bon Dieu; s'il fait semblant d'etre sourd, peut être ne le sera-t-il pas toujours.

Il y a longtemps que nous n'avons vû Mme Gardelle; elle est fort près de ses couches. Je ne manque jamais de faire vos complimens à M. Sol et le charge des autres lorsque ie ne les voy pas. Toutes nos sœurs perseverent malgré le tems et l'éloignement a vous aimer tendrement. Notre superieure, Sr de Hunaud, Sr Violet, Ponsan, Sr Marie Louise, toutes a l'envie me chargent de mille et mille assurances d'amitiés. Il fait un chaut

aussi vif que le froid de ce dernier hiver. Je crains qu'il sera aussi long. Bénisons Dieu de tout ; c'est lui qui nous a faits, il faut donc vivre pour luy.

Mille complimens et amitiés de ma part a Madame votre Maman et la chere sœur. Adieu, ma chere amie, aimés moy toujours un peu en retour de la plus tendre et sincere amitié. Je suis et seray toujours votre fidelle amie,

Sr Julie.

D. s. b.

## XXV

*A Madame*

*Madame Duvoisin à l'hôtel de M. l'ambassadeur  
de Hollande, rue Bergère*

*A Paris<sup>1</sup>.*

† VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 25<sup>e</sup> mars 1767.

Après vous avoir dit un grand Madame très respectueusement, ie reviens au stille du cœur. Hé bien, ma chere petite amie, Vous voila établie. N'avois je pas raison d'espérer toujours quelque bonne fortune ? Vous me paraissés tres contente ; il faut donc que j'en sois. Vous avés bien quelque soubson<sup>2</sup>, je ne dis rien de plus ; mais le sujet du soubson à part, personne ne sent plus vivement votre heureuse situation. Quels reproches ne mériteriés vous pas ? mais vous vous les faites, ie n'ay plus rien à vous dire. Il y a un article pourtant que j'ay peine à vous pardonner, vous avez eu tort de douter de mon secret. Lors de la consultation, un petit mot de confidence n'aurait pas ete déplacé. J'ay appris comme vous dites, votre mariage par le public, avec toutes les circonstances, dont vous ne me dites mot. Quarante mille livres, qui vous ont été données ; quinze mille livres de rentes, attachées à la dignité de votre époux. On n'a point su me dire, s'il avoit des biens paternels. J'ay fait tout ce que j'ay pu pour découvrir tous vos avantages. Du reste, bien persuadée que fut-il Hiroquois, Huron, Turc, pis encore, vous sauriés le métamor-

1. Cette lettre et les suivantes portent cette adresse.

2. Quelque soupçon que la sœur regrette de lui voir épouser un protestant, et surtout un pasteur ; rien de plus original que le désappointement et la défiance qu'elle laisse percer dans cette première lettre et dont on ne retrouve aucune trace dans les suivantes.

phoser par votre douceur, modération et conduite respectable. Je vois, par ce que vous me dites de son caractère, que l'ouvrage est tout fait. Vous ne le gâterez pas. Il faudrait être bien diabolique, pour vous rendre malheureuse. Je ne veux pas perdre le courrier. Il va partir.

Vous m'offencés ; que vous me devez pour la consultation ? j'ai payé Sol. Soyez tranquille, dites donc ce que je vous dois. Ne parlons plus de cet article. Toutes nos religieuses ont pris grande part à votre bonheur. Nous vous aimons toujours tendrement. Lorsque vous aurez le temps écrivez moi quatre pages. De vous je veux tout savoir. Adieu mon cher cœur. Je prie toujours pour vous ; Dieu est tout puissant.

Sr Julie.

D. s. b.

## XXVI

† VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de Toulouse ce 22 juillet 1767.

Que devez vous penser, Madame, de mon retard à répondre à votre toujours plus aimable lettre en date du 21 juin ? j'ai voulu attendre de finir ma petite pacotille que j'ai remise à M. Lavaysse (sous la protection de Sol, Gardelle et Vialet, pour trouver une commodité pour Paris) dont vous aurez avis de l'adresse du porteur, s'il ne doit vous la remettre. Admirés, je vous prie, trois branches renoncules faites par une bonne vieille de 67. Des deux œuillets, vous en présenterez un de ma part à M. du Voisin que j'aime de tout mon cœur, puis qu'il vous rend heureuse. Témoignez lui ma parfaite reconnaissance. Ah ! si vous aviez eu un quelqu'un qui vous eut fait passer des mauvais jours, mon affliction eut été extrême. Toutes les fois que je lis vos charmantes lettres, je pense que vous avez fait un beau songe où vous avez vu tout ce que je souhaitois à ma chère petite amie et vous avez pris mes desirs pour actions réelles. Je n'ai jamais rien fait qui mérite les sentimens de reconnaissance dont vous êtes remplie. Il n'y a que votre unique bon cœur à qui je les doive.

Tout ce que vous me dites qui vous intéresse m'attriste et me console. La disproportion du vrai de votre fortune, avec l'idée qu'on m'en avoit donnée, m'a presque mise de mauvaise humeur. Mais elle est adoucie par l'essentiel de votre contentement. Je vous savois très incommodée ; le principe n'est pas incompréhensible. Menagés votre poitrine, vous l'avez délicate. Si dans six mois vous êtes maman d'une demoiselle, je la veux Anne ou

Julie<sup>1</sup>. Ne négligés pas de me donner de vos nouvelles; si vous ne pouvés écrire, metes seulement : Je suis trop incomodée de telle chose pour écrire.

Ie ne puis vous rendre les amitiés que vous faites à la Sr de Mongasin; nous l'avons perdue le 10 may d'une hidropisie de poitrine. Depuis trois mois qu'elle avait regorgé le sang, la groce fievre ne l'avait point quitée. Nous l'avons beaucoup regretée. La supérieure, de Hunaud, Ponsen, Violet et toutes nos sœurs vous font mille complimens. Je vous prie de bien faire les miens à madame votre mere et sœur. Je suis charmee du plaisir que vous avés de vous voir souvent. Mille choses de ma part à M. Duvoisin; si je le connoissois un petit brin, je le prierois de vous faire une embrassade ausi tendre que ie vous la ferois. Ie n'ay point entendu parler de la duchesse Danuille, mais je luy say bon gré de son present et plus encore de ses sentimens. Les miens pour ma chere petite damote ne peuvent etre plus tendres. C'est de tout le cœur que ie suis et seray toujours toute à vous.

Sr Julie.

D. s. b.

## XXVII

+ VIVE J.

J'ay ete bien fachée, Ma chere amie, de ne pouvoir vous prevenir en son tems de l'arivée de la petite bœte afin de vous empêcher de payer le courier qui s'apele Petit, attendu qu'il l'etoit, M. Lavaysse n'ayant pu trouver comodité. S'il vous a demandé c'est une friponnerie. Des douleurs de rhumatisme m'empêchent d'écrire.

Je le fais aujourd'huy a la hatte, devant entrer en retraite ce soir. Veüllés ou non veüllés, ie prieray bien pour ma chere petite amie. Jamais ie ne prie si fervemment que lorsque vous en etes l'objet. Mais vous etes admirable en tout; vous nous suivés dans toutes nos demarches. Pour le peu de tems que vous avés été chez nous, vous nous savés par cœur. Rien ne vous oublie. Le principe part d'un bon cœur. Vous nous le devés par retour. Lorsque ie reçois de vos letres on s'empresse de savoir de vos nouvelles; ie lis et chaqu'une leve les yeux au ciel pour implorer la misericorde du Tout-puissant.

1. Mme Duvoisin n'eut que des fils; mais l'aîné, qui mourut au bout de que'ques jours, et le second, né l'année suivante, reçurent tous deux au baptême le nom d'Anne, qui était d'ailleurs un de ceux de Mme Calas leur marraine.

Parlons de Mlle votre fille : Vous m'en avés bien l'air. Je vous en prie, attendés vous y et recevés la de bonne grace. Je suis tres contente que vous la nourisiés. Le devoir vous y engage, et l'esperance de luy transmettre votre caractere. C'est le plus desirable. Ha ! si ie pouvois vous l'enlever au moment qu'elle marchera seule ! Je l'aimerois à la folie. Elle seroit bien la chere toutoune de chaqu'une de nous.

Si vous lisés mes letres à M. Duvoisin que ie saluë, ie vous defens de luy dire mon age. Je l'aime tendrement puisqu'il vous rent heureuse. Mes amitiés, ie vous prie a Madame votre Mere et sœur. Adieu petite damaute, ie vay m'enfoncer dans ma solitude avec Dieu seul. Dans ce monde c'est l'unique bonheur : commencer dès cette vie ce que nous faisons eternelement. Je suis toute vôtre, bien tendrement.

Sr anne julie FRAISSE de la  
V. Ste M. D. s. b.

Ce 27 7bre 1767.

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## XXVIII

### + VIVE JESUS

Il y a déjà longtemps, ma chere petite damaute, que j'étois bien en peine de votre situation. J'en demandois nouvelles a tout le monde. Enfin Sol, mal instruit, me dit que vous etiés revetue d'une fille. Bon, je dis ; voicy une petite Nanete ; je l'aimois déjà a la folie ; et plus folement encore je rêvois, je projetois, il me sembloit que ie la tenois déjà ; j'en étois rajeunie de dix ans. Je savois bien que votre terme étoit à la fin du courant, mais a une première on peut se méprendre. Je n'ay scu le vray que par votre letre dont ie vous suis doublement reconnoissante, écrite 19 jours après vos couches<sup>1</sup>. Au lieu de vous afliger, benissés Dieu d'avoir mis dans le sein de sa gloire votre prr né ! Nous ne naissons que pour le ciel ; il s'y trouve ; ie vous demende quelle fortune pouvés vous faire a vos enfants, pour si brillante qu'elle soit, qui puisse etre comparée ? Ce doit etre votre consolation.

1. Anne-Philippe-Henri, fils de Jean-Jacques Duvoisin et de Anne Calas son épouse, né le 10 décembre 1767, baptisé dans l'appartement de sa mère en présence de M. Serrurier, ancien, par F.-G. de la Brou chapelain, ayant pour parrain Philippe Debrus, représenté par M. Henri Dumas, et pour marraine Anne-Rose Calas, sa grand'mère maternelle (*Reg. des bapt. de la Chap. de Hollande*, au dépôt de l'état-civil de Paris). Il mourut au bout de quelques jours.

Je vois avec bien du contentement que votre santé n'est point dérangée et vous êtes assés jeune pour réparer votre perte. Lorsqu'il y aura lieu, dites le moy. Je ne puis me passer de savoir tout ce qui vous interesse. Vous ne sauriés croire, chere amie, combien souvent nous parlons de vous, et nos regrets de n'avoir pu vous tenir. Nous n'avons toutes qu'une voix sur vos aimables calités. Je m'amuse quelquefois a regarder votre gravure ; je la concerve soigneusement. Enfin tout ce qui est de vous me donne un plaisir singulier et me fait regretter les impossibilités de nous revoir jamais. J'avoüe mon foible : les larmes m'en viennent aux yeux quelque foix. Ha ! si je pouvois enlever ma chere Nanete sur les ailes des vents, je l'embrasserois mille foix et puis, tres fidelement, je la rendrois a M. Duvoisin pr ne point separer ce que Dieu a uni<sup>1</sup>. Vous ne sauriés croire combien je suis sensible a l'honneur qu'il m'a fait de m'ecrire quelque lignes. Faites lui mes excuses de ne luy repondre que de même. C'est par discretion ; je sáy bien qu'a son attention, je devrois une letre en toute seremonie.

J'ay fait la distribution de vos respects et compliments a toutes. On y a repondu par des aclamations de l'excelance de votre cœur, et chaqu'une a recommencé vos eloges. Ils finissent toujours : quel dommage !... Enfin, Dieu soit beni de toutes choses ! il est tout-puissant ; c'est ma consolation. Ne mourés pas avant moy, gardés vous de cette sotise ; mes larmes couleroient jusqu'a mon dernier soupir.

Adieu, ma chere amie. Soyés persuadée que mes vœux et mes souhaits pour votre bonheur sont independents des tems, parce qu'ils sont de tous. Je vous remercie des votres. Je me flate qu'ils sont de même. Je suis et seray toujours toute a vous de tout mon cœur.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE de la  
Visitation Sainte-Marie Dieu soit béni.

de notre monastere de toulouse

Ce 13<sup>e</sup> janvier 17[68] secret pour M. Duvoisin ; que diroit-il de mon stille<sup>2</sup> ?

1. En appliquant cette parole de Jésus-Christ (Math. 19, 6) à un mariage protestant, la vénérable religieuse se montrait plus tolérante que la loi française, devant laquelle ces mariages ne furent reconnus qu'en 1787, et que l'église catholique qui n'en admet pas la légitimité.

2. Le secret, c'est qu'étant née avec le siècle, elle a soixante-huit ans.

## XXIX

A M. DUVOISIN (SUR LA MÊME FEUILLE).

Je suis, Monsieur, plus sensible que je ne puis dire a votre attention. Vous santez combien le tresor que vous pcedés m'est cher et precieux. Vous la depeignés au parfait. Son ame tendre ne m'est pas inconnuë, non plus que les rares qualittés dont le Seigneur l'a abondamment pourvuë. Jouissés longues années du bonheur mutuel de vous etre si bien rencontrés. Je suis persuadée que connoissant si bien son caractere, vous éloignerés tout ce qui pouroit afliger sa tendresse. Avant de vous la devoir et sans vous nommer, elle m'avoit parlé des grandes obligations qu'elle vous avoit et cela avec le cœur que vous luy connoissés. Il me faut gener pour ne pas vous remercier de faire son bonheur. J'ay l'honneur de vous assurer de mon respectueux attachement.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE

## XXX

† VIVE JESUS

De ntre monastère de Toulouse ce 20<sup>e</sup> juillet 1768.

Enfin, ma belle dame, vous voilà résusitée apres six mois de sepulture. Vous sentés bien que je veux quereler. Mais ie commence d'en etre lasse. Ne parlons plus du passé; ie mets le diable sur ma bouche et n'aime point de voir mes amies en faute. Nous voila reconciliées.

Votre santé, me dites vous, est assés bonne. Vous me paroissés toujours contente, pleine de joye d'avoir bientot poupon ou toutoune. Le mois de novembre decidera cette grande question. Ce qui m'interessera le plus c'est de savoir comme vous serés. J'en seray dans l'inquietude. Je voudrais etre assés avant dans les bonnes graces de M. Duvoisin pour qu'il m'en dit un mot dans ce tems facheux, si vous n'etes en etat. Souvenés vous, s'il y a toutoune, de *Julie* ou *Anne*; ce sera ma petite filleule. Si je pouvois un jour me l'avoir auprés, je l'aimerois a la folie au dessus de tous obstacles. J'en porte un en moy même; j'ay fait la sottise de naitre trop tot; c'est irréparable.

Je pense que la santé du cher mari est bonne, puisque vous me chargés que de compliments pour M. Sol. Je les luy feray a premiere ocasion. Je suis toujours a votre service pour cet art.

cle et tous autres ou je pourois vous donner des preuves de mon tendre attachement. On se souvient toujours de ma chere Nanete dans notre maison ; nous en parlons souvent avec les eloges que votre aimable conduite a merit . Je suis bien flat e que M. Duvoisin veuille bien pencer quelque foix a moy. Je vous en ay l'obligation ; ie vous prie de l'asurer de ma parfaite consid ration. Il y a un proverbe gascon : voyons si ie sauray l'ecrire : « qui aime mon miou aime mon chion <sup>1</sup>. » Vous dir s sans doute que malgr  mon antiquit  ie ne suis pas de mauvaise humeur.

Mes amiti s a Madame votre mere et s eur. Celle cy est-elle  tablie ? Conserve-t-elle relation avec ses religieuses ? Si jel'avois eue aupr s de moy, nous aurions  t  amies. Je la soubsonne de ne l' tre pas trop avec ces dames.

Pren s tranquillement et comodement ce dont ie vay vous prier. Si vous savi s quelque marchand qui fit commerce de fleurs et qu'il vous fut possible de nous en procurer la pratique, vous nous feriez plaisir. Les irlandois et anglois en sont amoureux. Si meussieurs les hollandois  toient dans le meme gout, ie me flate de la preference, s'il vous en parvenoit. Il me prant des terreurs que les nations se brouillent, et voir disparoitre ma chere petite dame de notre royaume. En quelle terre du monde que vous soy s, vous me ser s toujours bien avant dans le c ur. Je suis toute a vous, ma plus chere amie

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de la V. S. M. D. s. b.

### XXXI

#### + VIVE JESUS

Permet s, Madame et tres venerable Maman, que je commence a presenter mes hommages a votre illustre fils<sup>2</sup>. Faites les luy entendre, je vous en prie. Il m'a caus  bien des alarmes, l'ann e ayant  t  des plus funestes pour les pauvres meres qui y ont perdu la vie. La complaisance de M. Duvoisin et votre attention ne pouvoient venir plus a propos. Vous voila hors de ce mauvais pas. En vous f licitant, je me f licite de meme, toujours attach e autant a vous qu'a moy. Et j'ose dire : bien plus ; puisque, en cas je donnerois ma vie, h  b'en de grand c ur ! Ma chere Nane'te, plut  a Dieu qu'il ne falut que ce sacrifice ! il seroit bient t fait.

1. Qui aime mon chat, aime mon chien.

2. Ann e-Philippe, n  le mercredi 12 octobre 1768 ; il eut m mes parain et marraine que son fr re. Ce second enfant mourut en 1771.



Vous voulés savoir de mes nouvelles. Ma santé est très bonne; mon employ, Conseillere de nos grands Etats, archivesse. Si vous n'avez oublié notre maison, j'ay un fort joly local, très agreable l'été; nous l'apelons cabinet voulué. Si vous voulés le venir occuper avec le petit marmot, a votre service. Le cher mari y seroit de trop; mes ofres ne sauroient aler jusque là. Je vous prie de l'asurer, malgré mon refus de logement, de tous vobres souhaits dans tous les tems pour son bonheur; de meme pour M<sup>me</sup> votre mere et sœur. Je suis tres sensible a leur souvenir. Je pense que si la sœur étoit établie vous m'en auriez fait part. Notre sœur de Hunaud est toujours là. La Sr Ponsan et Viale se portent bien et vous remercient de votre attention pour elles de meme que toute notre communauté qui vous chérit tendrement.

Ma chere amie, je veux vous apprendre comme on est en de voir de finir ses lettres, surtout lorsqu'on est maman. Je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
De la V. Ste M. Dieu soit beni.

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 4 janvier 1769, hay!

## XXXII

† VIVE JESUS

De notre monastère de toulouse ce 28 juin 1769.

Vous etes toujours plus charmante, mon aimable petite amie. Je ne pouvois avoir de plus sensible joye que la visite de M. Lavaysse. Voicy la premiere fois que j'ay eu la consolation de voir un quelqu'un avec qui j'ay pu savoir tout ce qui vous interesse: santé, vie heureuse a tous égards, fortune raisonnable, société tranquille, article qui me tacquinoit, trouvant en vous trop d'agrémens personnels pour ne pas craindre que mal a propos Me voila contente; l'estime que vous merités égalant la tendresse vous met hors de ce dont j'avois peur. Vous croyés bien que je n'ay pas interrogé de front, qu'on n'a pu meme comprendre ce que je cherchois; — mais comment vit-elle? Sans doute bien occupée et attentive dans son ménage. — Ce sont, m'a-t-on dit, ses querelles avec M. Duvoisin; il voudroit, lors qu'il n'y est pas, qu'elle sortit aussi: Sa santé en seroit mieux, dit-il. Mais madame a toujours une raison: Maman est venue.... Je n'ay pu.... Et le tendre mari est fâché qu'elle ne s'aille promener. — Bon, ai-je dit en moi même, me voila éclaircie.

Il m'a dit mille biens de vous deux ; autant, pour moy, de sujets de contentement. Je tramblois toujours de vous savoir en Hollande, mais par tout ce que M. Lavaysse m'a dit, je croy qu'il n'y a rien a craindre. Mais savés vous une nouvelle ? Votre letre, et ce que j'ay su d'ailleurs, m'a brouillée avec M. votre fils. Quoi ! ce petit marmot, ce coquin vous a volé toute votre graisse ! jusqu'à son retour, ie ne veux point l'aimer. Mon Dieu, votre poitrine ! je l'ay vu si délicate qu'elle merite vos attentions. Je crains votre tendresse maternelle. Vous, faite comme je vous connois, vous vous reduiriés aux derniers abois. Eh ! que ne le sevrés vous ? Il a neuf mois. En Angleterre trois mois suffisent. Nous sommes savantes de cette nation par l'ocasion d'une petite angloise de trois ans et demi que nous venons de recevoir. Ses parents sont de la premiere distinction. Ils viennent de Paris où ils ont resté longtemps ; avant de finir, ie sauray son nom ; peut etre les conoisés vous ?

Revenons a vous, chere amie. Vous me temoignés une reconnaissance qui excede l'objet. Il est vray que si j'avois pu aler plus loin en efets, de grand cœur ie m'y serois portée avec ardeur. Mais que pouvois-je faire ? rien au prix de mes desirs pour votre bonheur. Toutes les fois que ie reçois de vos letres, nous admirons votre cœur, n'en ayant jamais trouvé, dans le grand nombre de nos cleves, qui ait de la ressemblance, quoy que les soins aient ete bien autres. Il auroit falu etre de fer, dur comme bronze, pour en agir mal avec un petit ange. Il ne se seroit pas mieux conduit. Nous en parlons souvant. La douceur, discretion, modestie, politesse, vous auroit faite prendre pour une postulante des plus attentives. Plust a Dieu ! ç'auroit été bien alors que mon transport m'auroit fait dire comme Siméon : Retirés votre servante en paix. Oui, chere amie, j'aurois bien consenti a ma mort pour vous ceder la place. Mon cœur s'atendrit a cette pncée. Toujours la meme a votre egard et jusqu'au dernier soupir, ie ne cesseray de cherir tendrement ma chere Nanete.

Ne pensés pas que ce petit air sans façon de ma part me face oublier que vous etes une grande madame et une maman respectable. Je ne doute nulement que vous n'ayés le tour le plus convenable pour l'education de ce cher enfant. Mais votre cœur vous causera bien des souffrances ; votre ame tendre vous livrera de terribles combats avec votre raison ; ie vous en plains d'avance.

Mes compliments a M. Duvoisin. Je suis bien sensible a son souvenir. Je vous charge de lui témoigner ma vive reconnaissance de toutes ses bonnes façons vis a vis de vous. Lorsque vous en recevrés quelque témoignage singulier, tout de suite vous lui en fairés mes remerciemens.

Une embrassade, de ma part, ie vous prie, a Mme votre m<sup>ère</sup> et a la chere sœur. Je les remercie de penser quelque fois a m<sup>oy</sup>. Adieu chere amie, soyés persuadée que toute notre communauté vous aime, vous estime. La Sr Violet, Ponsan, Marie Rose, Sr de Ville et toutes les autres vous embrassent, vous cherissent. Adieu, je suis et seray toujours toute a vous.

Sr Anne-Julie FRAISSE.  
De la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

### XXXIII

#### + VIVE JESUS

de ntre monastere de toulou<sup>se</sup> ce  
30<sup>e</sup> may 1770

C'est belle fete, ma chere amie, lorsque vos lettres arivent. Je pensois : ma chere Nanette m'oublie. Je ne seray jamais capable de cette tres grande faute a son egard; non, jamais. Vous etes toujours dans mon cœur par un souvenir tendre, profond, sincere et solide.... Je m'arete et garde en moy tout ce que je veux dire. Ha! si je pouvois embrasser ma chere amie, que ne luy dirois-je pas? Les sentiments me fourniroient les expressions les plus fortes; encore seroient-elles au dessous du vray.

Vous voila a la veille de votre voyage en Suisse. Que ne feriez vous pas pour la santé de ce cher mari, avec votre ame tendre, un cœur affectif, vif, empressé, toujours prete à vous conter pour rien vis à vis les interets de l'objet de votre amitié. Vous voila tirée au clair. Jamais le souvenir de vos aimables qualités ne s'efacera de mon esprit.

M. Duvoisin mérite tous ces sentimens. Je desire que l'air natal le remete. Je n'aurois jamais deviné qu'il fut Suisse, a tout ce que vous m'en avés dit. Vous savés le proverbe dans notre pays. Non, il n'est point Suisse, et ma chere Nanete n'en sera jamais. Je vous connois assés pour m'assurer que vous prenés pour badinerie ce que je dis. Mais serieusement je plains le petit enfant de votre absence. Si je pouvois l'enlever, le metre dans notre cellule, vous le bien soigner de tout mon cœur, ie le ferois.

A votre retour ne manqués pas de me donner nouvelles de M. Duvoisin, de ma chere amie, du petit enfant, de Mme votre mere et sœur. Asurés les combien je suis sensible a leur souvenir. Si elles veulent l'agreer faites leur une embrassade de ma part. Il ne seroit pas de la decence de vous en dire autant pour le cher mary, mais ie le prie de vous la faire pour moy.

Nos elections et remue menage ne seront qu'au mois de May

nee prochaine. Toute notre communauté vous fait mille  
 . Nous parlons souvent de vous, de la conduite admirable  
 is avés eue dans notre maison. Votre cœur reconnoissant  
 ujet de nos éloges. J'ay chargé la Sr Violet de vos com-  
 a l'égard de sa famille; elle vous assure de toute son

a vous parler de ma tres vénérable personne. Je me  
 es bien dans le fonds de la santé, mais souffrante des dou-  
 e rhumatisme; a mon age, il faut bien quelque coup de  
 Mais ie suis toujours de bonne humeur; le noir de la  
 e est encore loin de moy. Je n'iray pas le chercher, peu  
 se de cette conformité avec ceux de mon age; elle n'est  
 is charmante. Adieu, ma chere amie. Aimés moy toujours  
 et soyés toujours sure de toute ma tendresse

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
 de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

liés pas au moins de m'ecrire a votre retour; ce sera a la  
 ut ou tout au moins dans 7bre.

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### XXXIV

† V. J.

ma charmante Nanete, vous voicy de retour. J'étois in-  
 du retart et toute empressée du succès de votre voyage,  
 en que des aventures qui pouvoient se trouver sur vos  
 rois que tout en est heureux et que le grand et tres inte-  
 objet est rempli. Vous voila, chere amie, toute joyeuse  
 ir de la santé de ce cher mari. Je vous en felicite, et a luy,  
 e de m'en permettre les assurances. La continuité depend  
 des soins. Lorsqu'on a été essentiellement ataqué, peu de  
 it culbuter. Je suis tres sure de vos attentions. Vous en  
 plie; elles sont de votre caractere. Je ne connay point  
 i cher mary; mais, s'il ne veut se soumettre, grondé  
 nagement. Brouillés vous, s'il le faut; au renouëmen  
 en seront plus forts, lors que revenant a luy il recon-  
 s torts.

r lisés point cet article. Si il étoit de mauvaise humeur il  
 it que les Moniales sement la division dans les familles.  
 ndale!

me sens point encore du taciturne de la viellesse. Ma  
 ancelle un petit brin dans cette saison, sans rien d'a-

Tout ce que vous me dites de votre petit poupon annonce un heureux avenir. J'aurois bien voulu le voir en matelot; c'est un coup d'œil divertissant. Mais vous avés grand tort de l'appeler petit morveux; quant on est capable de sérieux et de réflexion, on ne mérite point une expression autant injurieuse; vous luy en devés des excuses. Il me semble vous voir auprès de cet enfant le caresser, luy parler raison, attentive a tout pour sa santé et son éducation. Heureux les enfans qui vous auront pour mere! Vous êtes pourtant bien paresseuse.

Vous me savés, chere amie : mon cœur est rempli de tendresse pour vous; n'ayés donc attention qu'au principe, sans que je vous déplais dans ce que je vais dire. Mon affliction est extrême de vous voir appeler illustre l'ennemi de Dieu et de toute religion; ce sentiment est même opposé à la vôtre. Peut-il y avoir quelque chose de grand dans l'homme lorsqu'il s'oppose à l'auteur de son être? Que ne vous dirois-je pas si je suivais l'impétuosité de mon cœur et de mon esprit? Depuis votre lettre, j'en parle au bon Dieu; c'est toute ma ressource; mais, comme celle la ne peut tarir, je ne cesseray jusqu'à mon dernier soupir de le conjurer d'avoir un regard de miséricorde sur ma chere Namette, dont l'ame m'est bien plus chere que ma vie.

Toute notre communauté vous en dit de meme, bien sensible à votre souvenir. Jamais vous ne serés oubliée chez nous. On est tout content lorsque m'arivent vos nouvelles. Je vous charge d'une embrassade à madame votre maman et chere sœur; je ne say par quel endroit j'ay mérité leur souvenir; je les en remercie. N'embracés pas le cher mari; de quel ton la recevrait-il? Je n'en say rien. Adieu, ma chere et tres chere amie, tout à vous plus que ie ne puis dire.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

de ntre monastère de  
toulouse ce 28<sup>e</sup> 9bre 1770.

## XXXV

÷ VIVE JESUS.

de notre monastère  
de toulouse ce 7<sup>e</sup> 20ut  
1771.

Je suis affligée avec vous, ma chère amie; votre douleur fait la mienne. Je connois votre cœur et n'ay point douté de vos tendresses.

1. Voltaire.

ens pour tous les enfants que Dieu vous donnera; vous se-  
jours une bien bonne maman. Vos réflexions prises de la  
n me consolent. Lorsque le calme sera entier, après vous  
ligée, vous devés rendre graces au Seigneur de l'heureux  
ce cher enfant. Quelle fortune auriés vous pu luy faire à  
de la gloire dont il jouit? Il est en Dieu; il y sera éterne-  
. Tous les royaumes de la terre peuvent ils entrer en  
raison? Dans sa petite cource, il est parvenu a la posses-  
a bonheur qu'il nous faut acquerir plus chèrement. Luy,  
stacle ni au dedans de luy, ni sur ses pas, mais d'un vol  
se repose dans le sein de la Divinité. Cessés, ma chère  
e Nanete, de vous affliger. Prenés des sentimens plus con-  
au vray.

pose, puisque vous ne m'en dites rien, que vous n'êtes pas  
le cas d'espérer un prompt remplacement. Mes compli-  
je vous prie, au cher mari. Il est sans doute bien affligé.  
sequences que vous tirés de son sommeil et apétit sont  
stes. Vous avés droit d'espérer qu'il n'y a point de vice  
el, mais il est des personnes qui parviennent à une  
vieillesse avec une santé foible, et des infirmités de  
a vie. C'est un malade bien soigné, je pence. Mon Dieu,  
ma chere amie doit s'empreser à le soulager, avec  
si dans l'esprit et le cœur, de le faire jamais assés, et à  
é!

vous voyés bien que je ne vous ay pas oubliée. Vos aimables  
is sont trop avant dans mon cœur et dansceluy de toute no-  
nmunauté. C'est une fête pour chacune lorsque je reçois de  
res. Je serois bien grondée, si je ne leur en faisois part.  
vous font mille amitiés et vous assurent une place au no-  
si M. Duvoisin le veut bien agréer. Il est vray que son  
tement est necessaire; après quoy nous vous ouvrirons la  
avec grand plaisir. Laisés luy tout; vous seule nous suffi-  
sœur de Ponsan et Vialet veulent être distinguées dans la  
les compliments. Je ne veux pas me brouiller avec le cher  
si ma proposition doit le choquer, il faut la luy sous-

ay vous dire un petit mot de moy, puisque vous le voulés.  
cumeurs sont rhumatismales et ne peuvent guerir à mon  
mais j'ay fallu mourir par des coliques dont j'ay oublié le  
Elles étaient tres singulieres; c'est une maladie, qu'heu-  
rent M. Sol connoit. Il a toujours asuré qu'il me guéri-  
l y a réussi, malgré toutes les alarmes de nos sœurs. Elles  
duré trois mois; il m'en a falu autant pour reprendre mes  
et depuis deux mois, je suis hors d'infirmerie. Me voilà  
en au long, adieu chère amie; je suis une babillarde. On  
e quand on parle avec ce qu'on aime. Vous ne me dites

rien de mere et de sœur. Bien de complimens si les voyés. adieu  
toute à vous.

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de la V Ste M. D. s. b.

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# XXXVI

† V. J.

Je suis tres mécontente, ma toute chere amie, des nouvelles que vous me donnés de ce qui vous interesse et de celle que vous ne me donnés pas. Je l'ay cherchée dans votre lettre, mais point. Si elle avoit lieu, vous ne me le laisseriés pas ignorer. Il faut ne vouloir que ce que Dieu veut. Votre santé me parait déficiente. Celle du cher mari n'est pas conforme a vos souhaits. Je vous prie de luy temoigner ma reconnoissance de son souvenir. Asurés le du mien tres affectueux. En priant pour vous chere amie, je le fais pour luy; c'est bien de tout cœur que vous desiré a tous les deux le souverain bonheur. L'espérance est la dernière chose qui meurt en nous, lorsqu'on a un Dieu tout-puissant.... Je me tais et mets le doigt sur la bouche, non sur le cœur qui sera toujours le meme, en desirs des plus vifs.

Faites bien mes amitiés à Mme votre mere et Mlle votre sœur. Elles sont bien bonnes de se souvenir encore de moy. Je vois avec bien de la peine la continuité de la mauvaise santé de votre chere sœur. Combien de petits soins ma chere Nanette n'a-t-elle auprès de ses malades? Tout ce qui est en elle respire les attentions.

Comment vous souvenés vous toujours de nos petites affaires? en voicy le détail. Notre Savoyarde, après ses six années de Supériorité est de retour a notre maison d'Annecy qui l'a faite Supérieure, et nous, notre chere mere d'Hunaud qui vous reçut chés nous. La Sr de Ponsan est assistante, Sr Marie Louise sacristaine, Sr Vialet le cabinet des ouvrages. Je leur ay fait toutes vos amitiés. Toutes commencent, par premier mouvement, a lever les yeux au ciel, et puis vos éloges recommencent. Ils n'ont jamais cessé; on parle toujours de vous avec une tendre amitié. Toute notre communauté vous chérit tendrement. Votre bonne conduite dans notre maison vous a merité ces sentimens. Si M. Duvoisin veut vous le permettre, nous vous receiverons avec grand plaisir.

Parlons d'une bonne vielle. M. Sol m'a guerrie de mes coliques; je n'en ay que quelque rare et léger retour. Mes douleurs

augmentent avec l'age. Je ne suis pourtant pas a l'infirmerie ; cela ne va donc pas trop mal.

Adieu, chere amie, je suis bien toute a vous, je vous assure ; mais bien tendrement.

Sr anne julie FRAISSE, de la  
V. Ste M. D. s. b.

de notre monastere de toulouse  
ce 8<sup>e</sup> janvier 1772.

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### XXXVII

† V. J.

Enfin, ma toute chère aimable Nanete, vous voicy résucitée, ou moy résucitée dans votre cœur. J'attendois vos nouvelles avec la dernière impatience ; je pensois que quelque voyage dans les cantons suisses me privoit de ce plaisir. Je vous remercie de votre félicitation, a l'ocasion de la canonisation de notre sainte fondatrice. J'aurois bien voulu tenir prés de moi, à la grille de notre infirmerie, ma petite amie.

Il y a deux ans que nous en fimes la célébrité. Ah, si vous y aviez été présente, peut être aurais-je vu, ce qu'après quoy, j'aurais consenti de mourir. Mes désirs auraient été remplis.

Vous voilà hors des craintes qu'on a souvent à subir dans l'état ou vous êtes. Les termes dangereux sont passés. La continuité des menagements vous fairont, j'espere, arriver heureusement au port. Je ne comprans pas bien ce que vous me dites de votre demenagement. Je vous croyais logée dans le meme hautel de M. l'ambassadeur ; que logement, nourriture, vous n'aviés à vous en mêler ; que la république d'hollande s'en avisoit comme de leur ambassadeur. Vous ne devés point douter que ie ne m'intéresse a tout ce qui fait interet à ma chere amie. Et votre adresse vous me la donnés cavalierement, sans me dire si c'est même rue, même faubourg. Je metray toujours à l'hotel d'olande. Je n'en say pas davantage.

A presant ma santé va assés honnetement pour mon age. Mes coliques me saluent quelques foix, mais sans suites dangereuses comme dans leur commencement, ou je faillis périr. Les douleurs tout doucement augmentent. Je commencay hier de vous écrire et n'ay pu finir qu'aujourd'hui. Vous me dites une parole que je voudrois bien plus étendue. *Mon cœur est uni au votre pour la vie* : Mon Dieu, quels désirs n'ay je pas, qu'il le soit éternellement et que des ce moment il n'y eut plus d'obstacle ! Les larmes m'en viennent aux yeux. Si mon Dieu me fait miséricorde,



comme je l'espere, je lui demanderay bien qu'il l'étende s vous. Les prieres des saints qui nous sont manifestées dans l'apocalypse, n'ont et ne peuvent faire tort aux mérites de Jésus Christ.

Il faut qu'avec quelqu'une de vos charmantes caresses, vous engagiez M. Duvoisin à me donner de vos nouvelles au commencement du mois d'octobre. J'en seray inquiète des premiers jours. Je n'ose l'en prier; faites luy agréer mes complimens, n'ose dire amitiés; mais faites en bien pour moy à Mme votre mere, et chere sœur.

Il vous faut tirer de votre catalogue Sr Marie Louise. Il y a six semaines qu'une fièvre maligne l'a emportée à l'onsièr jour, à la suite d'un asthme étisie. Elle n'a pu dans cet état résister à la violence de sa fièvre. Notre Supérieure vous embrasse tendrement et dit que votre cœur est unique. Le moule en est cassé<sup>1</sup>.

de notre monastère  
de toulouse ce 1<sup>er</sup> juillet  
1772.

### XXXVIII

*A Monsieur  
Monsieur Duvoisin, à l'hôtel  
de Monsieur l'ambassadeur  
d'Hollande. Paris.*

† VIVE JESUS.

Je ne puis, Monsieur, vous faire un remerciement à l'égal de ce que je sens de reconnaissance pour avoir bien voulu m'apranç l'état de ma chere amie que j'aime toujours bien tendrement. vous felicite à tous les deux de cet heureux evenement dans toutes ces circonstances. Plaise à Dieu que cet enfant<sup>2</sup> ait bonheur de concerver la robe d'innocence dont il est actuellement revetu.

Oserai-je vous prier, Monsieur, d'embrasser pour moy ma chere Nanete et de l'assurer que toute notre communauté s'int

1. Le reste de la lettre manque.

2. Alexandre-Benjamin, né à Paris le jeudi 24 septembre 1772. Il a été baptisé par son père; il eut pour parrain Alexandre-François-Gaube Lavaysse, le compagnon de captivité de son aïeul, et pour marraine Mlle Anne-Rose Calas, sa tante. (Voir sur ce fils de Nanette, le seul qui ait vécu, la note 35 à la fin du volume.)

resse a tout ce qui la regarde ? Nous ne l'oublierons jamais et tres souvent nous entretenons de ses aimables qualités.

Permetés que je vous rénouvelle ma gratitude de votre complaisance et que vous ayés bien voulu vous preter a me donner cette satisfaction, de meme que de tous les souhaits heureux dont vous me comblés. J'ay l'honneur d'etre avec une parfaite considération, Monsieur, votre tres humble obéissante servante

Sr Anne Julie FRAISSE  
de V. Ste M. D. s. b.

de ntre monast. de toulouse  
ce 7e 8bre 1772.

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### XXXIX

† VIVE JESUS.

Vos nouvelles, chere amie, sont un beaume à mon cœur ; il est toujours le meme pour vous. Vos lettres sont toujours chères a notre communauté ; chaque une s'empresse de les entendre et vos éloges recommencent. Combien avons nous démerdé de petits enfants ! Après dix ans de soins et d'education nous n'en recevons signe de vie. Vous, presque seule, vous souvenés toujours de nous, et ne nous ayant connues que par des voyes qui devoient nous rendre destables a vos yeux, si votre bon cœur et votre heureux caractère ne vous avoient fait discerner notre innocence et le desir que j'avois d'adoucir vos malheurs. Vous portés votre reconnoissance bien au dela du peu que je faisois, et y comprenés ce que j'aurois fait si j'avois pu. Mes desirs s'etendoient loin ; c'est tout, et ce dont vous croyés me devoir un peu de part dans votre cœur. Vous en avés une bien grande dans le mien. Je pousse mille soupirs vers le ciel et vous aime trop tendrement pour ne pas vous souhaiter le vray bonheur. Les larmes m'en viennent aux yeux ; ne m'en sentés pas mauvais gré.

La rigueur de la saison augmente mes douleurs ; il faut bien que cette maison de boue dont nous sommes revêtus finisse un jour ; il n'y en a pas tant pour tous.

Je vois avec grand plaisir que M. Duvoisin est a presant en bonne santé, de meme que Mme votre mere et Mlle votre sœur. Je vous prie de les asurer de ma sensibilité a l'honneur de leur souvenir, et leur dites bien des choses pour moy. Vous aurés soin d'assurer M. votre fils de tous mes tendres sentimens ; je laisse les tems propres a cette commission au tems que vous ju-

gerés bon. La Sr Violet et toutes en general et particulier vous font mille amitiés. J'ay dit a M. Sol l'article qui l'interessc, il vous en remercie et vous assure de ses respects.

Adieu, chere amie, je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur.

Sr Julie, de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

de ntre monast. de toulouse  
ce 6<sup>e</sup> janvier 1773.

## XL

+ V. J.

Vous ne doutés point, chere amie, que je ne sois au nombre des morts. Je n'ay jamais perdu de vue votre letre, malgré ma maladie et l'augmentation de mes douleurs. Cet article me met souvent dans l'impuissance d'ecrire. Je suis a presant remise et mes petites forces sont revenues, mais mon rumatisme subsiste.

Vous voulés que j'oublie la date du 6<sup>e</sup> janvier 1774. Je le veux bien; vous me savés de bonne composition. Tout en moy subsiste malgré mes vieux jours.

Mon Dieu, ma chere Nanete, dans quelle cruèle situation a été votre cœur a la maladie du cher mari! Je le conois, ce cœur tendre, affectif, tout plein de feu. Mais je vous trouve bien paresseuse: vous ne me parlés que de M. votre fils et point de vos autres enfants. Je vous plains de tout mon cœur. Terrible maladie de n'avoir que fils unique. Mais il ne faut vouloir que ce que le bon Dieu veut.

Je vous prie, faites mille amitiés de ma part a votre Maman et chere sœur. Mes complimens a M. Duvoisin. Je suis bien sensible a l'honneur de leur souvenir. Toutes celles de nos religieuses qui vous ont vue chés nous vous font mille tendres complimens. Celle qui etoit Supérieure lors de votre entrée<sup>1</sup> est devenue aveugle; elle me charge de vous dire mille choses pour elle.

Adieu mon cher cœur. Je suis toute a vous et vous embrasse tendrement.

Sr Julie de la V. Ste M. D. s. b.

De la visitation  
le 6<sup>e</sup> mars 1775.

1. La sœur d'Hunaud.



# NOTES.

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## 1

(Page 20)

### LA MAISON DES CALAS.

Les Calas habitaient la maison n° 16, qui porte aujourd'hui le n° 50, dans la rue appelée aujourd'hui *des Filatiers*. La gravure placée en tête de ce chapitre est une réduction d'un dessin fait en 1845 par M. Ennemond Moquin. La maison, à cette époque, était encore telle que les Calas l'avaient habitée. La boutique contiguë à l'allée, et qui porte le nom de Lafond, était celle de Calas ; l'autre, celle du tailleur Bou. L'allée, fort longue, aboutit à une petite cour, dont elle était séparée autrefois par une porte basse qui n'existe plus. Il suffit d'avoir vu les lieux pour comprendre qu'on aurait dû visiter avec le plus grand soin cette allée et cette cour, lorsqu'eut lieu l'arrestation des prévenus.

Aujourd'hui la façade de la maison a subi de grands changements : à chaque étage une troisième fenêtre a été percée, dans l'intervalle des deux autres ; le mur de briques soutenues par des soliveaux a été enduit de plâtre, un pilastre a été figuré à chaque extrémité, au-dessus de la frise qui surmonte les boutiques et qui est décorée aux deux bouts d'un ornement en pomme de pin, le tout également en plâtre. Les deux boutiques n'en font plus qu'une.

Il ne reste de l'ancienne façade qu'une seule chose, le dessus

de la porte d'entrée. C'est, me dit-on, ce qu'on appelle en termes de l'art, une archivolt en *accolade pédiculée*. Cet ornement vermoulu est en bois d'une extrême vétusté et remonte à une époque antérieure aux Calas, de plusieurs siècles. Immédiatement au-dessus est sculpté un écusson qui porte en trois lettres gothiques le nom du Christ : i h s (*Jesus Hominum Salvator* ou plutôt *JHESUS*).

Nous empruntons à M. l'abbé Salvan de Toulouse la description de l'intérieur de la maison et des changements qu'elle a subis, sans pouvoir garantir nous-même à ce sujet, l'exactitude de ses assertions, qui cependant nous semblent très-plausibles.

*Rez-de-chaussée.* — Un long couloir conduisait dans une grande cour où l'on voyait un acacia séculaire. Sur la rue s'ouvraient deux boutiques : l'une, contiguë au mur de la maison voisine, était celle du tailleur Bou. La boutique de Calas était divisée par une cloison en deux compartiments ; le premier, sur la rue, portait le nom de *boutique* ; le second, sur le derrière, s'appelait le *magasin*. On communiquait intérieurement de l'un à l'autre par une porte de deux mètres de hauteur et à deux battants. Cette porte était garnie de barreaux dans sa partie supérieure. Du couloir on entraît dans la boutique, et on entraît aussi de ce même couloir dans le magasin. A côté de ce magasin se trouvait l'escalier. Après l'escalier, on trouvait une troisième porte donnant sur une très-petite cour qu'on avait formée en prenant quelques mètres de terrain sur la grande. Le tailleur Bou avait aussi une petite cour à son usage, formée également de la première.

Dans la petite cour de Calas se trouvaient la fenêtre qui éclairait le magasin et la porte d'une très-grande cave voûtée qui occupait le dessous de la boutique et du magasin de Calas ainsi que de celui de Bou. Cette cave était à l'usage exclusif de Calas.

*Premier étage.* — Cet étage était composé de quatre pièces : 1° une salle à manger donnant sur une galerie qui dominait la cour ; 2° de ce salon on passait dans la cuisine qui prenait jour sur la rue ; 3° à côté de la cuisine se trouvait la chambre de Mme Calas, aussi sur la rue ; 4° du salon à manger on passait aussi dans une chambre qui prenait jour sur la galerie et où se réunissait ordinairement la famille après le repas. Un lit se trouvait dans cette chambre, de laquelle on passait encore dans celle de Mme Calas...

La maison Calas a subi de nos jours quelques transformations

les deux boutiques n'en font plus qu'une ; la grande cour et les deux petites ont disparu sous un ciel ouvert ; l'escalier a été changé, quoiqu'il soit à la même place. La disposition des pièces du premier étage est la même ; la galerie extérieure a été en partie enlevée ; la porte d'entrée et le couloir sont les mêmes ; les portes qui, du couloir, donnaient entrée dans la boutique, le magasin et la petite cour, ont été murées.

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2

(Page 28)

## SUR LE PLAN DE CE LIVRE.

On a blâmé le début de ce livre ; on nous a reproché comme un manque d'ordre ce récit du *fait* qui précède ici l'étude des caractères, ainsi que l'exposé des circonstances antérieures de la vie des Calas et de leurs accusateurs. On a vu trop de recherche ou d'art dans cette façon de commencer notre histoire et de retourner ensuite en arrière, comme si nous avions voulu imiter le romancier et les dramaturges, en nous jetant à l'improviste *in medias res*. Notre but a été différent. Nous voulons que notre lecteur juge en dernier ressort les Calas et leurs juges, et nous commençons le procès par où, selon la nature des choses, il commence toujours, par le *fait* qui en est le point de départ et qu'il s'agit ensuite d'apprécier d'après toutes les enquêtes possibles sur les circonstances et les personnes. C'est la marche naturelle et normale de toute procédure. Nous ne commençons point par un résumé comme en prononce le président des assises à la fin des débats ; nous débutons par le récit de l'événement qui donna lieu à ces débats, tel qu'il parvint à la connaissance du public et de la justice.

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3

(Page 29)

## JEAN DE CORAS.

Jean de Coras, célèbre jurisconsulte et conseiller au parlement, né à Toulouse en 1513, devint protestant et fut massacré comme tel, dans sa prison, en 1572. Nous n'avons pas besoin, sans doute,

de faire remarquer que sa foi religieuse ne put avoir d'influence sur l'opinion qu'il exprime au sujet du capitoulat ; on sait d'ailleurs que, jusqu'au massacre de 1562, cette dignité fut souvent donnée à des huguenots.

## 4

(Page 31)

## SAINT-FLORENTIN.

Louis Phelypeaux, comte de Saint-Florentin, né en 1705, mort en 1777, fut ministre cinquante-deux ans. Ses débauches, ses flatтерies, sa conduite perfide et cruelle à l'égard des protestants qui ne cessa de persécuter, sont les seuls traits caractéristiques de ce ministre de Louis XV, plus véritablement roi que lui, et qui administra la France pendant un demi-siècle avec un pouvoir à peu près absolu.

On s'étonne de trouver en ce personnage, non-seulement contre les protestants une inflexible raideur de despote et de bureaucrate, mais une véritable et violente haine. J'en ai cherché les motifs sans les rencontrer, à moins pourtant que la première cause de cette malveillance passionnée ne fût ce fait très-connu, que l'orgueilleuse dynastie des Phelypeaux avait été elle-même quelque temps protestante. Il semble que le souvenir de ses aïeux huguenots exaspérât Saint Florentin, comme une tache dans sa généalogie, et qu'il tint à honneur de montrer qu'il ne leur ressemblait en rien. Les Phelypeaux furent secrétaires d'État et ministres pendant près de deux siècles, de Henri IV à Louis XV sous les noms de Poutchartrain, Saint-Florentin, Maurepas et Vrillière.

Un tableau effrayant de ce qu'était, au dix-huitième siècle, l'administration française, a été peint d'une main sûre par M. Barante, dans sa vie de Saint-Priest.

## 5

(Page 33)

## DAVID DE BAUDRIGUE.

Nous aimons mieux ne pas croire à un Mémoire manuscrit que

nous avons entre les mains et d'après lequel David aurait été coupable de concussion. Cette pièce est de la Beaumelle ; nous n'en ferons usage que comme venant d'un ennemi, et pouvant être suspecte pour cause d'animosité personnelle.

Ce Mémoire s'appuie sur des faits qu'il serait peut-être encore possible de vérifier ; nous citerons par ce motif, sans en garantir les assertions, le passage où est résumée la carrière publique de David.

« Autrefois poursuivi criminellement par le Procureur-Général, échappé au fouet et aux galères à force de protections achetées, flétri pourtant par un arrêt d'une *admonition qualifiée* sur l'impureté et l'indécente gestion de sa charge, depuis mille fois réprimé et toujours inutilement par les commandants de la province, condamné par feu M. de Thomond à la privation de ses fonctions de police à l'égard d'un bourgeois dont il avait assassiné le fils, chargé dans une information par une créature de ses amis de l'avoir corrompue par argent donné avant, pendant et après la procédure, pour déposer contre un citoyen, enfin chassé par arrêt du Conseil du 12 février 1765, de la place de Capitoul perpétuel, et bridé par le même arrêt dans ses fonctions de Capitoul triennal, sous le prétexte énoncé que la ville n'a retiré aucun fruit de son administration, mais réellement pour le punir d'une concussion exercée envers un Anglais protestant auquel il avait vendu très-chèrement l'ordonnance toujours gratuite d'inhumation. »

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6

(Page 34)

LAGANE.

Le procureur du roi en la ville et Sénéchaussée de Toulouse, Charles Lagane, était un homme lettré. Il avait remporté en 1761 un prix quadruplé (c'est-à-dire ajourné trois ans de suite) pour un mémoire sur l'État des sciences, des arts, des lois et des mœurs à Toulouse, sous les rois visigoths.

Dans son testament (10 août 1788), il légua à la ville 40 000 livres pour être consacrées à la création de fontaines publiques. Ce don a rendu sa mémoire très-populaire à Toulouse ; cependant la *Biographie toulousaine* porte sur lui ce jugement assez sévère, parfaitement motivé par les faits : « Dans les fonctions honorables



dont il fut revêtu, il montra des lumières et de l'intégrité ; mais quelquefois un zèle trop ardent lui fit dépasser les bornes dans lesquelles il devait se renfermer. »

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7

(Page 37)

LES ARCHIVES DU CAPITOLE.

« Ces archives sont d'énormes volumes solidement reliés ; les feuilles sont en parchemin. Au commencement de chaque année, se trouve avec leurs portraits, le nom des huit Capitouls chargés de la direction et de la surveillance des huit arrondissements de la Cité. Tous les portraits ont été déchirés en 93 ; on en remarque encore quelques vestiges.

« Toutes les années, soit avant, soit après le procès de Calas, sont complètes ; la relation des principaux événements s'y trouve exposée dans un style assez clair ; l'écriture est très-lisible, en grosses lettres. L'année 1760 est complète, mais c'est en vain qu'on cherche la suivante, 1761, pendant laquelle eut lieu l'affaire des Calas, — sept feuilles de parchemin ont été laissées en blanc, elles terminent un volume ; le volume suivant commence avec l'année 1762.

« Voilà un fait bien significatif. Les Capitouls, qui faisaient rédiger eux-mêmes l'histoire de leurs actes administratifs, ont préféré supprimer de leurs annales l'année 1761, plutôt que de mentionner le procès de Calas. Ce silence, à défaut d'autres preuves, les jugerait à lui seul.

« Il faut cependant ajouter une remarque. Dans le volume suivant, à la première page, sur le verso de la couverture du livre, on lit une observation écrite de la main de M. d'Aldéguier, auteur d'une *Histoire de Toulouse*, et ancien bibliothécaire : « Observation essentielle : les pages qui contenaient l'histoire du procès de Calas ont été arrachées. Toutes les pièces relatives à ce procès, qu'elle qu'en fût l'importance, ont été détruites. » Telle est, à peu près littéralement, la teneur de cette note ; elle semblerait justifiée par les débris que l'on voit, de trois ligatures en fil, qui fixaient évidemment quelques feuilles du livre.

« Mais, d'après l'avis du bibliothécaire actuel qui occupe cette fonction depuis trente ans, ces fils retenaient les portraits des

Capitouls de 1762, portraits qui, comme tous les autres, ont été arrachés.

« Nous ne pouvons que nous ranger à cette dernière opinion, — il serait difficile d'expliquer le motif pour lequel sept feuilles de papier ont été laissées en blanc, quoique terminant un volume ; — elles étaient plus que suffisantes pour renfermer tous les détails des événements de 1761, — il est des années qui ne remplissent pas plus de cinq feuilles. D'ailleurs il est complètement inexact que les pièces du procès aient péri, même à Toulouse.

« L'année 1762, depuis le commencement jusqu'à la fin, ne contient pas un mot qui ait trait à l'accusation portée contre Calas, ni à sa mort, qui cependant eut lieu cette année. C'est un fait positif.

« Il est certain que l'année 1761 n'a pas été écrite. On pourrait penser que les sept feuilles de parchemin étaient réservées à l'année 1760, que cette année n'est pas terminée. — Ce serait une erreur, car on lit ceci à la fin de cette année 1760 (ce sont les Capitouls qui parlent ; ils font leur rapport annuel) : « *Il ne nous manque, disent-ils, que leur approbation (celle des citoyens témoins de leur administration), elle sera de leur part un bienfait, et pour nous une récompense. Dixi.* » Le secrétaire a fini ; 1761 va commencer, on tourne et l'on trouve sept feuilles de papier en blanc : le tome suivant s'ouvre par l'histoire de l'année 1762. »

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8

(Page 48)

MÉTIERs ET PROFESSIONS DONT LES PROTESTANTS  
ÉTAIENT EXCLUS.

On peut voir dans le *Vieux Cévenol* de Rabaut Saint-Étienne (notes du ch. 3) la longue liste des professions interdites aux protestants par Louis XIV. Le commerce seul leur restait, parce qu'il est impossible, même au despote le plus absolu, d'empêcher une classe quelconque de ses sujets de vendre et d'acheter. Il fallait se faire catholique pour devenir avocat (Déclaration du Roi du 11 juillet 1685 ; Arrêt du conseil du 5 novembre 1685 ; Déclaration du Roi du 17 novembre 1687) ; — procureur (Décl. du 15 juin 1682) ; — clerc de procureur (Décl. du 10 juillet 1685) ; — huissier, sergent, archer, recors (Décl. du 15 juin 1682) ; —

imprimeur, libraire, orfèvre, médecin (Arrêt du conseil du 9 juillet 1685; Décl. du 6 août 1685); — chirurgien, apothicaire, épicier (Édit du 15 septembre 1685); — domestique d'un protestant (Décl. du 11 janv. 1686); — apprenti chez un protestant (Sentence de la police de Paris, 1621). En 1748, à Ganges, la femme Fesquet fut condamnée à 3000 livres d'amende pour avoir exercé l'état de sage-femme sans être catholique.

## 9

(Page 59)

## M. DELAMOTE.

Le rôle de M. Delamote, dans toute cette douloureuse histoire, est singulier. Outre les relations d'affaires et d'amitié qu'il avait entretenues avec les Calas, deux faits seulement sont certains, qu'il eut quelque part à la conversion de Louis Calas et qu'il prêta des livres catholiques à Marc-Antoine; mais ce dernier les lui rendit en se déclarant plus convaincu qu'auparavant de la vérité de la religion protestante. Les accusés désiraient vivement que M. Delamote fût appelé en témoignage; de pareilles déclarations faites par un membre du parlement ne pouvaient que leur être très-utiles; M. Delamote ne fut point appelé. Peut-être ne dépendait-il pas de lui de se faire citer. En tout cas, comme son collègue M. de la Salle, s'il avait eu son courage, il eût trouvé moyen d'agir en faveur de ses anciens amis dans l'imminence du péril où ils se trouvaient.

Nous n'acceptons pas comme fondé le bruit odieux qui se répandit à Montauban, qu'après la mort de Calas, il avait offert à Nanette son appui et son crédit à des conditions déshonorantes<sup>1</sup>.

Mais nous ne pouvons dissimuler l'étrange impression qu'a produite sur nous une série de quatre pièces qui font partie de la collection de M. Fournier. La première est un extrait de lettre sans signature, à Mme Calas. L'auteur sollicite, depuis quel temps, auprès de M. de Choiseul, ministre de la marine, l'intendance dans les colonies. Or, ayant appris que Mme Calas a tout accès auprès de M. l'ambassadeur de Hollande, il

1. Voir la dernière des trois lettres de Montauban (sans signature) que nous avons publiées dans l'appendice de notre recueil de *Lettres inédites de Voltaire*, p. 297.

prie de faire agir pour lui ce personnage auprès du ministre. Il tâche de la convaincre que son intérêt est de lui rendre ce service :

« Si mon projet pouvait réussir, il m'attirerait à Paris, et c'est alors que je dirais moi-même au roi ou aux ministres que j'aurais occasion de voir, les deux différentes conversations que j'ai eues avec M. votre fils (Marc-Antoine) quelques mois avant sa mort. Je ne doute pas qu'elles ne déterminassent à ordonner la réhabilitation de la mémoire de votre respectable époux. A ne suivre que mon inclination pour vous, je ferais même le voyage, uniquement pour vous rendre ce service ; mais vous savez que mon peu de fortune s'oppose à une pareille dépense ; l'idée que je vous propose concilierait ces deux objets. »

Au dos de cette pièce Mme Calas a écrit : « *Copie d'un service qu'une personne m'a demandé.* » Or nous avons trouvé dans la même collection la minute de la belle réponse de Mme Calas, écrite de sa main et intitulée comme suit :

« Du 26 février 1763, copie d'une lettre à M. Delamotte, conseiller au parlement de Toulouse, en réponse à la sienne du 5 février de la même année.

« Monsieur, le caractère de probité que j'ai reconnu en vous de tout temps m'assure que, s'il vous avait été possible, sans vous exposer vis-à-vis de votre corps, de me donner votre déclaration touchant ce que vous savez sur le compte de Marc-Antoine, mon fils, et sur celui de mon mari, vous ne vous seriez pas refusé de rendre témoignage à la vérité ; et je me flatte que si le respectable tribunal devant lequel je suis, vous appelle ici pour cela, vous remplirez mon attente. Vous avez été en occasion de connaître la droiture et la probité de mon cher mari, et je ne doute point que vous ne rendiez justice à cette innocente victime lorsqu'il en sera question, comme je ne doute pas non plus qu'il ne jouisse maintenant dans le ciel de la gloire qui est réservée à son innocence. Il était réservé sans doute au martyr ; il en a éprouvé toute l'amertume. Pour moi, je suis prête à verser jusqu'à la dernière goutte de mon sang pour défendre et justifier son innocence, la mienne et celle de tous les accusés. Cette parfaite conviction de notre parfaite innocence, l'honneur, et ma forte tendresse pour ma famille sont les motifs qui me soutiennent et me fortifient dans ma juste demande. J'espère que ce grand Dieu, en qui j'ai toute ma confiance, ne permettra pas que la vérité demeure plus longtemps inconnue. Il est trop juste pour la laisser opprimer ; il achèvera son œuvre, car il est le soutien de la vérité, le mari (de la veuve) et le père des orphelins ; et ma cause ne peut être que bien défendue, ayant pour moi la justice de ce Père de lumière et notre parfaite innocence.

« .... Soyez tranquille, je vous supplie, monsieur, sur l'usage que je pourrai faire de votre lettre. Je n'ai pas moins de droiture depuis mes malheurs, que j'en avais auparavant, et ma discrétion ne me permettra jamais de porter préjudice à qui que ce soit pour en retirer avantage, et encore moins à un galant homme comme vous, monsieur, que j'estime et que j'honore infiniment. Je ferai toujours tous mes efforts pour

vous en convaincre. Ce ne sera jamais l'intérêt qui me fera agir pour parvenir à vous procurer ce que vous désirez. Les vôtres seuls sont les motifs qui m'animent à faire les plus grands efforts pour découvrir quelque voie sûre auprès de la personne que vous m'indiquez et chez qui je n'ai jamais eu aucune relation directe. Cependant j'ai trouvé le moyen d'intéresser certaines personnes qui peuvent tout sur son esprit. On ne fait envisager de très-grandes difficultés, parce que ces messieurs ne mêlent d'ordinaire jamais que des affaires pour lesquelles ils sont envoyés ici. Cependant si la chose est possible, j'ose me flatter qu'on parviendra par une autre voie. On m'a promis de me rendre réponse la fin de l'autre semaine. Je n'ai pas voulu différer plus longtemps vous informer de ma bonne volonté à vous servir. Si je pouvais y réussir je serais trop récompensée par le plaisir que j'aurais de vous être quelque utilité. C'est avec ces sentiments que j'ai l'honneur d'être, avec un très-profond respect, etc. »

Deux autres lettres, écrites et signées par M. Delamote, en mai et en mai 1763, complètent ce dossier. Elles abondent en remerciements et en témoignages de sympathie. On y lit le nom de la personne dont Mme Calas espérait quelque chose pour M. Delamote auprès de l'ambassadeur ou du ministre, c'était M. d'Argental; et Delamote apprend avec de grandes démonstrations de joie qu'il peut espérer l'appui de « quelqu'un aussi respectable, aussi estimé et aimé que M. le comte d'Argental, dont le crédit à la cour est très-considérable. »

En résumé, cette correspondance nous apprend d'abord que Mme Calas, sollicitant, en grand deuil de veuve, la révision de l'arrêt de mort de son mari, était sollicitée elle-même, comme ayant du crédit auprès des grands, et cela par un membre du parlement de Toulouse ! Ensuite, il nous semble que M. Delamote exploite, avec assez peu de délicatesse, au profit de son ambition, son témoignage devant la justice dont il est un des ministres. Enfin, on doit conclure des expressions de politesse respectueuse dont Mme Calas le comble, que tout au moins elle ne le croyait pas coupable d'avoir voulu séduire sa fille. Mais ce qui ressort avec le plus d'éclat de cet incident bizarre, c'est le noble caractère de la veuve, dont la lettre, défectueuse par le style (et plus encore, dans l'original, par l'orthographe), est admirable de dignité et de pieuse élévation.

Nous relèverons cependant encore, dans une des lettres de M. Delamote, un détail curieux. Il a reçu de Mme Calas les factums de ses avocats ; il l'en remercie et en fait l'éloge ; mais il ajoute :

« Je n'ai voulu laisser voir à personne le mémoire de M. Loyseau.

J'ai conseillé à Louis d'en user de même. Je crains que, s'il tombait dans les mains de quelqu'un inquiet, on ne le dénonçât au Parlement qui le condamnerait au feu, par rapport à la manière dont M. Loyseau parle de la fête de la délivrance de la ville, à la page 17. »

Voilà ce qu'attendait du fanatisme de ses collègues, un des Conseillers au parlement de Toulouse.

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## 10

(Pages 69 et 136)

### FAMILLE LAVAYSSE.

Parmi les renseignements abondants qui nous ont été fournis sur cette famille nombreuse, nous choisirons ceux qui ont de l'intérêt par eux-mêmes ou qui expliquent l'origine de quelques-uns des papiers de famille où nous avons pu puiser.

Lavaysse père (David), né à Caraman le 13 novembre 1695, épousa en 1722 Antoinette Faure et mourut à Trie le 9 novembre 1768. De ses nombreux enfants, six seulement parvinrent à l'âge mûr. C'étaient trois fils et trois filles. Les fils sont connus sous les noms de Lavaysse du Pujolet, Étienne Lavaysse de Vidou, avocat, et Alexandre-Gaubert Lavaysse, le compagnon d'infortune des Calas.

Le premier eut plusieurs enfants, entre autres Julie, mariée à Joseph de Caffarelli, conseiller d'État, etc., et dont la fille aînée (Jenny) épousa M. Auguste Gleizes.

Le second fils de David, Étienne Lavaysse de Vidou, était fiancé à Mlle de Bruguière, fille d'un gentilhomme influent dans le pays de Foix et petite-nièce du célèbre Bayle, jeune personne fort remarquable par sa beauté, ses vastes lectures et une très-rare distinction d'esprit. Voltaire lui écrivit un jour : « Vous avez droit à mes hommages par l'immortel Bayle, dont vous êtes la nièce, et encore plus par votre mérite et par votre esprit. »

Enfermée comme protestante au couvent de Hauterive, elle y fut l'objet des plus mauvais traitements de la part des religieuses chargées de la convertir, qui l'accusaient « d'une perversité outrée et d'un endurcissement affreux. » Elle ne fut libérée qu'après une longue et dure détention.

Son mariage avec Étienne Lavaysse allait être célébré, lorsque

le jour même de ses fiançailles, le bruit s'étant répandu qu'une assemblée religieuse se tenait dans le château qu'elle habitait, il fut envahi et pillé par une bande de fanatiques. Mlle de Bruguère se réfugia à Toulouse dans la famille de son fiancé. Une nouvelle catastrophe vint encore retarder le mariage; ce fut l'arrestation de Gaubert Lavaysse chez les Calas. Les angoisses que causèrent à Étienne Lavaysse le péril et les souffrances de son frère nuisirent à sa santé. Déjà gravement menacé, il épousa enfin celle qui depuis longtemps l'attendait, mais il ne tarda guère à mourir. Sa veuve, brisée par tant de douleurs, lui survécut peu de temps; elle mourut en 1766, à l'âge de vingt-sept ans, chez ses tantes qui l'avaient élevée. Elle avait écrit, disent MM. Haag (France protestante), auxquels nous empruntons ces détails, une *Histoire du fanatisme* et un récit de ses propres malheurs, qui ne furent point publiés. Sa courte vie est un touchant exemple des infortunes où l'intolérance plongeait le plus grand nombre des familles protestantes.

Le plus jeune fils de David Lavaysse est celui qui figure si souvent et si douloureusement dans ce volume.

Deux de ses sœurs doivent encore être nommées ici; l'une est Marie-Henriette, femme de M. de Sénovert, avocat et plus tard capitoul, dont une fille fut mariée à Bergasse de Laziroule, membre de la Constituante et du Conseil des Cinq-Cents.

L'autre sœur de Gaubert que nous désignerons ici, Rose-Victoire, née en 1723, épousa en premières noces un sieur Nicol, et, en secondes, Angliviel de la Beaumelle, l'ardent ennemi de Voltaire, qui, comme lui, s'imposa de laborieux et persévérants efforts en faveur des Calas. Il existe de piquantes lettres de Voltaire à Mme de la Beaumelle, dont il détestait le mari et dont il avait réhabilité le frère. Aglaé de la Beaumelle, fille des précédents, née en 1768, mariée en 1794 à M. J. A. Gleizes, frère cadet de M. Aug. Gleizes, fut veuve en 1843, et mourut en 1853; j'ai dit comment un précieux recueil de documents sur l'affaire Calas, formé en trois volumes in-8°, par Mme de la Beaumelle, possédé ensuite par Mme J. A. Gleizes, sa fille, échut, par la mort de cette dernière, à sa belle-sœur et nièce à la mode de Bretagne, Mme Gleizes de Caffarelli, qui a bien voulu m'en accorder la communication.

Cette dernière est décédée au château de Lavelanet le 16 février 1869, à l'âge de soixante-treize ans.

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## 11

(Page 83)

## CARRIÈRE.

Ce jeune homme, fils d'un marchand de draps, était protestant ainsi que ses parents, mais il avait réussi à se faire recevoir avocat, au moyen d'un certificat de catholicité. Marc-Antoine et lui étaient très-intimes amis ; peut-être même les Carrière étaient-ils alliés des Calas. Quoi qu'il en soit, d'après les renseignements que nous ont donnés les descendants de Carrière, les deux jeunes gens étaient liés par une communauté d'origine, d'études et même de désordres : tous deux étaient joueurs. S'il faut en croire une tradition de famille, d'autant plus admissible qu'elle n'est pas à la gloire de l'aïeul, Carrière et Marc-Antoine auraient joué et perdu, le 13 octobre 1761, quelques louis que Carrière aurait pris chez son père. On va jusqu'à dire que ce dernier, s'en étant assuré plus tard, fit enfermer son fils pendant un certain temps au fort Brescou. Si, comme on l'a supposé, la visite du jeune avocat aux prisonniers avait eu pour but leur défense, il est facile de comprendre qu'ils aient mieux aimé la confier à Sudre, avocat très-célèbre dans le pays, qu'à cet étourdi peu recommandable. Quoi qu'il en soit, il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce qu'un avocat, parent ou ami du défunt et des accusés, leur ait fait quelques visites et donné quelques conseils sur leur affaire. C'est à tort qu'on a présenté ces circonstances comme suspectes.

Voici sa lettre à Lavaysse. Il serait sans intérêt de reproduire les autres :

« N'oubliez pas, Monsieur, ce que je vous recommandais hier avec un ami, de dire la vérité et en quel état vous trouvâtes le fils aîné de M. Calas, et que si vous ne l'avez pas déclaré dans votre première audition, ayant dit ne l'avoir pas vu, ce fut à la recommandation du cadet qui, sur l'avis de son père, vous pria de cacher le fait, de crainte que la famille ne fût déshonorée, parce qu'on entraînait les corps des suicidés sur la claie.

« Vous aviez sans doute dit à M. Cazeing avoir vu le cadavre étendu ; il y a apparence que Cazeing l'aura dit ainsi dans sa déposition ; vous devez dire tout cela, quand vous serez interrogé, afin qu'on connaisse les motifs qui vous ont fait dissimuler la vé-



rité, croyant d'ailleurs qu'alors on ne chercherait que des preuves contre la mémoire du défunt.

« Rappelez-vous si vous entendîtes le cadet crier : « Ah ! mon père, mon père, mon père ! ah ! mon Dieu ! » car il y a des voisins qui ont déposé avoir entendu crier ainsi, et pour prévoir toute équivoque, il convient d'indiquer celui qui criait ; on dit encore avoir entendu crier à l'assassin. Rappelez-vous si vous avez entendu le père ou le cadet crier ainsi. Mais je présume que vous étiez déjà sorti lorsqu'ils criaient ainsi. Vous avez nécessairement dû entendre les premières exclamations du cadet, car vous me l'avez dit ; n'oubliez pas de le dire quand vous serez interrogé comme aussi ce que vous fîtes pour empêcher la mère d descendre.

« On dit qu'il est prouvé par la procédure que la servante ayant entendu du bruit, elle se mit à la fenêtre pour s'informer de ce que l'on faisait, qu'on lui répondit que c'était dans la maison même, et qu'un instant après elle descendit à la porte criant : *Ah ! mon Dieu, l'an tuat !* on dit qu'elle a déclaré ainsi dans sa première audition. Je vous avoue que l'on ne peut pas trop concilier la curiosité de cette fille que vous m'avez dit lui avoir ordonné de rester auprès de Madame et de ne pas la laisser descendre, cette fille s'étant déjà mise à la fenêtre quand vous lui avez donné cet ordre.

« Vous a-t-elle demandé ce que c'était ? le lui avez-vous expliqué à l'oreille en la consignait auprès de sa maîtresse ? et si l'on vous interroge sur tous ces faits, préparez-vous d'avance à y répondre et dites toujours la vérité. Car, comme je suppose que vous l'avez dite, je suis fort tranquille sur votre compte. L'on vous demandera sans doute où vous allâtes quand vous sortîtes pour la première fois ; il faut le dire. L'on vous demandera encore ce que vous vîtes en entrant, et vous devez le dire ; où vous allâtes quand vous sortîtes pour la deuxième fois. Vous ne devez pas surtout oublier que vous allâtes avertir M<sup>r</sup> l'assesseur, à faire avancer le greffier ; car je crois que vous me l'avez dit et votre empressement à rentrer dans la maison où les Capitouls étaient déjà rendus avec le guet, car tout cela manifeste votre innocence. MM. vos frères sont arrivés ; on attend ce soir M. votre père, peut-être aviez-vous (tout) expliqué naïvement à M. Ca-zeing, qu'on a mis en liberté (qui) sera ouï en témoin ; et en ce cas on fera en sorte qu'il dépose relativement à l'aveu que vous lui avez fait, afin qu'il n'y ait pas de contradiction.

« Il est inutile que je signe cette lettre, vous devinez assez qui je suis.

« Toulouse, le 15 octobre au soir 1761. »

N'était-il pas du devoir strict d'un avocat, parent ou au moins ami des détenus, voyant qu'ils se perdaient par un mensonge dicté par un faux point d'honneur, de les exhorter à dire toute la vérité? Ce que Carrière fit, assez gauchement, par ses lettres anonymes, l'avocat le plus scrupuleux devrait le faire pour ses clients.

#### PROCÉDURE SECRÈTE.

Cette déplorable transformation de la procédure, d'abord publique, était depuis longtemps accomplie; elle a été racontée avec une parfaite clarté par M. Faustin Hélie, dans son *Histoire et Théorie de la Procédure criminelle* (tome 1<sup>er</sup> du *Traité de l'Instruction Criminelle*). Il montre très-bien (p. 401) que les poursuites dirigées contre les hérétiques eurent une funeste influence sur les formes de la justice. Les papes, et en particulier Boniface VIII, recommandèrent expressément l'information secrète, qui, peu à peu, envahit toutes les juridictions.

Dès le seizième siècle, un protestant, l'illustre Coras s'était élevé avec éloquence contre ce système de procédure. « Advisent ici les juges, dit-il, combien il est dangereux et plein de péril, principalement ès matières criminelles, où se traite de l'honneur et de la vie de l'homme, d'asseoir jugement sur la déposition (écrite) des témoins, lesquels souventes fois assurent pertinacement choses fausses pour véritables, dont après sont contraints à départir... Il est plus assuré de les faire venir en personne, les voir, voir et contempler leurs gestes et contenance, les interroger, leur faire rendre raison du tout exactement, car je cuide (pense) qu'ainsi fesant, serait retranché le chemin à beaucoup de malignités, calomnies et conspirations des témoins, qui ne se rendraient si faciles et proclins (enclins) à faussement déposer, pour la révérence, honneur et majesté d'une Cour souveraine, devant laquelle conviendrait répondre... La foy et l'autorité de tesmoins qui sont présens est autre et plus grand sans compa-

raison que des dépositions qui sont seulement leues et récitées, et le plus souvent escrites, dictées, plus à l'appétit d'un mauvais garçon de commissaire ou d'un brouillon de greffier, que selon l'intention et volonté du tesson. » (Arrêt mémorable, p. 99.)

On peut consulter avec fruit sur les criants abus de la législation française, avant la Révolution, la *Théorie des Lois Criminelles*, de Brissot de Warville, et une brochure pleine de sens et fort modérée qui porte ce titre piquant : *Essai sur quelques changements qu'on pourrait faire dès à présent dans les lois criminelles de France, par un honnête homme, qui depuis qu'il connaît ces lois, n'est pas bien sûr de n'être pas pendu un jour.* — A Paris, 1786. 53 p. in-8°.

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### 13

(Page 114)

#### LE CHANCELIER POYET.

C'est, dit-on, le chancelier Poyet, qui transporta des usages de l'inquisition, dans la jurisprudence française, cette disposition rigoureuse et injuste, d'après laquelle le prévenu était censé admettre pour vrai tout ce que diraient les témoins, qu'il n'avait pas d'avance reprochés. Cette mesure, perfide à l'égard de ceux qui l'ignoraient, était d'une extrême gravité dans un temps où toute la procédure ne tendait qu'à obtenir un aveu plus ou moins explicite. Dans le procès qui lui fut fait après sa disgrâce, il subit la loi qu'il avait établie et en fut cruellement puni. A l'occasion d'un témoin dont la déposition pouvait le perdre ou le sauver, il fit demander au roi de lui donner au moins le temps d'y songer, réclamant ainsi pour lui-même une exception à sa propre loi. C'est à Poyet que fut appliqué le mot fameux : *Legem patire quam ipse fecisti.* (Voir *Lettres sur la Procédure Criminelle en France* (1788) et *Arrest. Luc. L. 12, t. 1, c. 11.*)

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## 14

(Page 115)

## M. DE LA PIVARDIÈRE.

Le plus flagrant exemple de l'absurdité de cette disposition d'après laquelle la preuve des *faits justificatifs*, quand on la permettait, devait être retardée jusqu'après l'achèvement de l'instruction, c'est le fameux procès d'un M. de la Pivardière, qui avait disparu en 1697. Sa femme et un prêtre étaient accusés de l'avoir assassiné. Il reparut et crut terminer le procès en se montrant. On lui répondit que son existence était un *fait justificatif* dont on ne pouvait admettre la preuve qu'à la fin de l'instruction; en d'autres termes, on devait d'abord rechercher longuement, minutieusement et à grands frais, s'il n'était pas mort, avant de lui permettre de se montrer vivant. Encore était-ce là une permission qu'on avait parfaitement droit de lui refuser. Il fut dix-huit mois à obtenir du Parlement de Paris un arrêt comme quoi il était en vie.

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## 15

(Page 131)

## LES JUGES DES CALAS' AU PARLEMENT.

L'esprit qui régnait vers 1762, parmi les conseillers des cours souveraines en France, a été indiqué avec justesse, par M. Calary, avocat, dans un discours sur les *Cients de Voltaire* (Bibliog. n° 90). Après avoir montré dans la société française, jusqu'après le milieu du dix-huitième siècle, plus de politesse que de sensibilité vraie, ainsi qu'un esprit de raillerie sceptique et insouciant qui disposait mal aux grands efforts et aux dévouements infatigables, l'auteur ajoute : « Quant aux parlements, à supposer qu'ils pussent échapper à la légèreté mondaine et à l'esprit froidement moqueur du temps, ils avaient pour garder le silence, un autre motif : ils croyaient leur existence liée à la rigueur des lois criminelles qu'ils étaient chargés d'appliquer; et, comme tous les pouvoirs

à leur déclin, qui font de la cause de leurs abus leur propre cause, ils défendaient ces lois avec autant d'énergie que leurs prérogatives les plus chères. Une protestation pouvait-elle, du moins, s'élever du barreau? Sans doute, il renfermait dans son sein des âmes généreuses : mais on sait que, fidèles auxiliaires des parlements, lorsque ceux-ci, après avoir épuisé leur droit de remontrance, interrompaient le cours de la justice, les avocats n'auraient pas consenti à plaider devant une magistrature improvisée et fermaient même leurs cabinets; il leur eût été difficile, après avoir ainsi, dans les circonstances les plus graves, fait cause commune avec les Parlements, de critiquer en matière pénale un corps dont ils étaient les fidèles soutiens politiques. Ajoutons que, à voir appliquer chaque jour des dispositions barbares, la sensibilité s'émousse, et que, les avocats se familiarisant peu à peu avec les peines par la continuité du spectacle, ces peines finissaient naturellement par leur paraître moins rigoureuses. Le barreau n'était donc pas capable de remuer profondément cette société frivole, froidement polie, indifférente aux souffrances humaines; il avait lui-même besoin d'être excité par une voix puissante à la défense des opprimés.

« Ainsi, pendant la première moitié du siècle, silence complet sur ces graves questions : l'esprit public passe à côté d'elles sans se révolter, sans manifester un doute; la loi continue toujours de frapper l'accusé sur de simples indices, de proscrire toute procédure publique, d'ordonner la torture comme mode de preuve, de prodiguer la peine de mort, d'inventer les supplices les plus raffinés, de frapper même des faits comme le sacrilège, le suicide, l'hérésie, qui ne peuvent être des crimes qu'aux yeux de la religion. Voilà la justice au milieu du siècle dernier, cette justice cruelle, devenant plus cruelle encore lorsque les juges chargés de l'appliquer obéissent à un sentiment qui les aveugle, comme la passion politique ou le fanatisme religieux.

« Ce que le clergé, la noblesse, les parlements, le barreau ne faisaient pas, les lettres devaient l'accomplir. »

Ce tableau de l'état des esprits parmi les représentants de la loi concerne tous les parlements de France. Pour celui de Toulouse, il ne faudrait pas oublier, après ces traits communs à tous, de rappeler sa haine ardente pour l'hérésie, et dans l'affaire des Calas, son ignorance profonde de ce qu'était, en dehors de la France et de l'Église romaine, la religion de la moitié de l'Europe.

Nous croyons devoir faire connaître, en quelques mots rapides,

les principaux magistrats qui prononcèrent l'arrêt de mort de Jean Calas.

Nous n'avons rien à dire du premier président, Joseph-Gaspard de Maniban, marquis de Câmpagne, qui avait épousé une Lamoignon et mourut en 1762 après quarante ans de présidence.

Sur le refus de Dominique de Bastard, doyen du Parlement, son fils François, maître des requêtes au conseil d'État, fut mis, le 26 septembre de cette même année, à la tête du parlement de Toulouse. Né le 16 décembre 1722, il donna sa démission en 1769, se retira à Paris et y mourut le 20 janvier 1780, entouré de ses deux plus intimes amis, les maréchaux de Lorge et de Biron.

Le procureur général J. G. A. A. Riquet de Bonrepos était un descendant de l'illustre Riquet, auteur du canal des deux mers, qui avait été créé baron de Bonrepos. Nous verrons ce magistrat se montrer peu digne de cette famille italienne des Riquetti, qui fit une haute fortune en France et en Belgique, par les princes de Chimay et les ducs de Caraman, mais que rendirent bien plus célèbre deux hommes extraordinaires, Riquet d'abord et ensuite Mirabeau.

« Nous avons contre nous, écrit Voltaire le 7 juillet 1770, dans l'affaire Sirven, ce procureur général de Belzébuth. » Le mot est vif, mais il a été dit à propos du réquisitoire donné par ce magistrat contre Mme Calas et les trois autres prévenus, le lendemain du supplice de Jean Calas. Qu'on le lise, et peut-être pardonnera-t-on à Voltaire l'extrême vigueur de son indignation. Bonrepos était entré en charge le 9 février 1750 ; il dut se retirer devant le parlement Maupeou en 1771.

Trois présidents à mortier doivent être nommés ici, Antoine-Joseph de Niquet, chancelier des Jeux Floraux, et les deux présidents de la Tournelle, Henri-Gabriel du Puget et Jean-Joseph-Dominique de Senaux, tous deux membres de cette même Académie du *Gay-Saber*, et tous deux juges de Calas.

On appelait Tournelle dans les Parlements, la chambre criminelle. Je trouve parmi les papiers de la famille Lavaysse l'épigramme suivante contre les deux présidents de la Tournelle :

Senaux disait d'un ton sévère :  
Si mon fils désertait le culte de son père,  
Je vous le pendrais bel et bien :  
Donc, Calas a pendu le sien.  
Puget répondit : Chacun s'aime ;  
Pour moi, quand je serais perdu,

Je me garderais bien de me pendre moi-même :  
Donc, son fils ne s'est pas pendu.

M. de Niquet prit part, d'une autre manière et moins directement, à cette douloureuse affaire. Après cinquante ans de services comme conseiller et comme président, il devint premier président en 1770. Il se retira en 1787.

On nous pardonnera d'avoir énuméré les noms, les alliances, les titres de ces magistrats; nous voudrions les faire bien connaître, et nous nous étonnons nous-même du contraste que présente le rôle qu'ils vont jouer devant nous avec les noms fameux des uns, les titres académiques des autres, et les fonctions élevées qui leur étaient communes à tous. Nous avons eu occasion de juger les caractères de quelques-uns d'entre eux par leurs lettres assez nombreuses au comte de Saint-Florentin, que nous avons pu lire aux *Archives*, ou par les réponses de ce ministre. Nous publions quatre lettres inédites de MM. de Senaux et du Puget<sup>1</sup> où l'on s'étonne de trouver les préventions les plus aveugles contre le protestantisme, et une entière ignorance à ce sujet, qui serait très-digne de David lui-même, sans qu'ils se montrent plus humains que lui. Entre les deux, M. du Puget a la palme. Le président de Senaux se distingue par la persévérance avec laquelle il demande à M. de Saint-Florentin des pensions ou des gratifications. Tout prétexte lui est bon pour cela, tantôt les vœux de nouvelle année, tantôt la mort de M. de Maniban. J'ai lu trois lettres où le ministre, trois fois de suite, lui répond que cette demande ne le concerne pas et qu'il doit s'adresser au chancelier. Le président de Niquet ne se fait pas faute non plus de ces sollicitations intéressées. Le 5 décembre, M. de Bonrepos obtint pour sa part 10,000 livres d'augmentation sur le brevet de retenue de sa charge. Il faut en convenir, ces redoutables personnages perdent à être surpris dans le déshabillé de leur correspondance intime avec le secrétaire d'Etat.

La Chambre de la Tournelle qui jugea les Calas se composait de treize magistrats, les présidents du Puget et de Senaux, qui ne nous sont que trop connus par leurs lettres à M. de Saint-Florentin, les conseillers de Bojal (doyen), Cassan-Glatens (appelé aussi Cassan-Gotte ou de Jotte), d'Arbou, Coudougnan, Cambon, Gauran, Desinnocents, Miramont, Étienne de Boissy (qui avait été chargé de continuer l'information et auquel on croit pou

1. Pièces just. V et XX; XXII et XXV.

voir attribuer l'insigne honneur d'avoir seul voté pour l'acquittement), de Cassan-Clairac, rapporteur, de Lasbordes. Ce dernier s'était d'abord retiré à la campagne, et avait dit qu'il se refusait. Il revint et prit part au jugement. Quelques-uns pensent qu'il vota l'acquittement; il ne paraît pas que ce soit exact.

Il y a lieu de croire que plusieurs de ces magistrats auraient dû se récuser. On lit dans le premier Mémoire de Mariette qu'un des juges avait dit aux demoiselles Calas qui sollicitaient pour leur père : *Vous n'avez plus d'autre père que Dieu*. Elles voulurent le récuser, ainsi que deux autres, contre lesquels il y avait des motifs de suspicion légale. Il fallait pour cela être autorisé par les accusés eux-mêmes. Mais on ne put les prévenir, ni parvenir jusqu'à eux. Aucun soldat ne voulut ou n'osa leur faire passer le moindre avis.

Le Président Niquet et les deux conseillers Gauran et Desinnocents furent de ceux qui, le 25 novembre 1771, réhabilitèrent Sirven. (C. Rabaud, *Sirven*, p. 140.)

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## 16

(Page 134)

### SUDRE.

La cause ne pouvait tomber entre des mains plus capables. Théodore Sudre s'était distingué de bonne heure; il entra à peine dans la carrière quand le fameux jurisconsulte Furgole, dont le suffrage est une autorité de premier ordre, fit mention de lui dans son *Traité des testaments* (t. IV, p. 28) en ces termes : « M<sup>e</sup> Sudre, mon confrère, à l'âge de vingt-cinq ans, a une connaissance très-exacte de l'histoire et des systèmes du droit romain et en débrouille avec une facilité merveilleuse les difficultés qui paraissent les plus inextricables. »

Sudre publia en 1753 une nouvelle édition du *Traité des Élections d'Héritier*, de Vulson, conseiller au parlement de Grenoble, qu'il dédia au premier président de Maniban, et plus tard un *Traité des droits seigneuriaux*. Il était né à Gimont (Gers) en 1718, et avait été élevé au collège de la Doctrine chrétienne à Toulouse; il se maria en 1755, eut dix enfants et mourut en 1795. Sa réputation de science, de talent et d'intégrité était grande.

Nous regrettons doublement de le trouver parmi les créanciers



les plus exigeants de Mme Calas. « Il veut me rançonner, elle le 22 novembre 1763; et quoy qu'il a été bien payé, il demande encore plus de huit cents livres. Si je l'en croyais, fondrait tout ce qui peut me revenir. »

Malheureusement la perte de sa clientèle, par suite de sa poursuite pour les Calas, n'explique peut-être que trop ces exigences d'un père d'une si nombreuse famille.

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 17

(Page 143)

OPINION DE DEUX MÉDECINS.

Le célèbre chirurgien Louis lut devant l'Académie de chirurgie, à propos même de cette affaire, un Mémoire qui a été (*Bibliographie*, n° 31). Il montre que, quand un homme pendu, son cou porte une marque oblique montant vers le haut, et sans meurtrissure. — C'est ce que le rapport officiel a constaté sur le cadavre de Calas aîné. Selon le même savant, quand un homme a été étranglé, on trouve à son cou une marque laide et horizontale et le plus souvent avec ecchymose, résultat de la torsion. Il ajoute :

« Il serait bien difficile qu'un homme en fit mourir un autre pendant; cela demande trop d'appareil : il est plus commode de commencer par l'étranglement; on suspend le corps après avoir tâché de faire méconnaître le genre de crime; c'est une réflexion qui suit le mouvement violent qui avait porté à l'acte. Mais il est rare que le crime ne laisse des traces qui le trahissent. »

Un autre médecin distingué de l'époque avait étudié l'affaire Calas et partageait la même opinion.

« Jean Lafosse, né à Montpellier le 13 novembre 1742, s'est consacré à l'étude de la médecine, et sans avoir jamais été professeur, fit cependant des cours publics qui furent très-suivis. Il a laissé un travail sur le dessèchement de quelques parties des côtes du Languedoc. Dans un autre ouvrage, il avait également entrepris d'établir les inconséquences que l'anatomie lui fournissait dans le rapport destiné à constater l'état du cadavre de Calas fils, dont il considérait le suicide comme constant. »

cette occasion une correspondance suivie avec Voltaire. Une mort prématurée l'enleva le 21 juin 1775 à l'âge de trente-trois ans. » (Voir la *Statistique du département de l'Hérault*, par Hippolyte Creuzé de Lesser, 1824, page 264.)

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## 18

(Page 191)

## LA PLACE SAINT-GEORGES.

Plus d'une fois j'ai tristement examiné cette place fatale, où l'on chercherait en vain la colonne votée plus tard par la Convention. Peut-être vaut-il mieux qu'il en soit ainsi; pour moi, le monument le plus éloquent à la mémoire de Calas, ce sont quelques anciennes maisons qui sont demeurées debout çà et là, les mêmes qu'il y a cent ans. Si ces façades de bois et de brique noircie pouvaient dire ce qu'elles ont vu, on n'écrit pas aujourd'hui à Toulouse que Jean Calas était un assassin et un parricide. Ces mêmes fenêtres regorgèrent de témoins émus qui le virent mourir comme meurent les martyrs.

En 1794 la place Saint-Georges reçut le nom de place Calas, mais elle l'a perdu depuis longtemps. Un monument à Clémence Isaure, la fabuleuse fondatrice des Jeux floraux, s'élève sur cet emplacement, à peu près comme l'obélisque de Louqsor à l'endroit où moururent Louis XVI et tant d'autres victimes de la *Terreur*. Nous comprenons qu'on évite les souvenirs qui peuvent donner lieu à des récriminations trop vives. L'obélisque au moins représente une époque historique, mais la légende de Clémence Isaure paraît bien puérile si près de l'échafaud de Jean Calas. Il est des lieux sacrés où l'on doit se taire, et non débiter les rimes du *gay-saber*.

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## 19

(Pages 191 et 196)

## LA TORTURE ET LA ROUE.

La torture avant le jugement était dite *préparatoire* ou *purgative*; on la considérait comme un simple moyen d'information,

et non comme un déshonneur, ni même comme un châtiment. Si le patient n'avouait rien, il ne pouvait être condamné.

Quand, au contraire, la condamnation à mort était déjà prononcée, la torture avait pour but d'obtenir la désignation des complices; et on l'appelait définitive ou préalable, *définitive* par opposition à la *question préparatoire*, *préalable* quant au supplice qu'elle précédait.

Pour la question *préparatoire*, le juge pouvait se contenter, s'il le voulait, de l'*ordinaire*. La question *préalable* au contraire, comprenait nécessairement l'*ordinaire* et l'*extraordinaire*, parce que la justice ne devait plus aucun ménagement au condamné; et ses souffrances, dans ce cas, étaient un commencement, une dépendance de la peine de mort. Il devait être conduit au dernier supplice immédiatement après, parce que, disait la loi, *son corps était confisqué* et ne lui appartenait plus. Tel fut le sort de Calas.

Nous voudrions épargner à nos lecteurs tous ces détails hideux. Nous devons cependant, autant que possible, expliquer les faits, et ne point dissimuler ce qu'a souffert ce malheureux père de famille.

Voici ce qui se passait à Toulouse (chaque Parlement avait à cet égard ses usages).

« A terre, sur le plancher, étaient placés deux boutons éloignés l'un de l'autre d'un pied environ. Le bouton s'attachait aux fers que le patient portait aux pieds. De ce bouton partaient de grosses cordes qui se roulaient sur un tour à bras. Deux anneaux partaient aussi des cordes qui venaient saisir les poignets du supplicié : de cette façon les quatre membres étaient fixés. Au signal donné, les exécuteurs se mettaient à l'œuvre : l'un faisait aller le tour; l'autre tenait les cordes; un troisième plaçait son pied sur le bouton. Cette question avait pour but d'étirer les membres<sup>1</sup>. »

Il faut ajouter qu'après avoir allongé le corps en l'attachant au premier bouton, la même opération avait lieu au deuxième bouton, plus éloigné d'un pied. Souvent aussi, dans certaines villes, après avoir mis ainsi le corps dans un état de tension extrême, on lui passait encore sous les reins un tréteau, puis un autre plus élevé<sup>2</sup>.

1. Salvan, p. 112.

2. Mémoire instructif pour faire donner la torture, annexé par le Parlement de Paris à son arrêt du 18 janvier 1697.

maintenant ce qu'était la question à l'eau également  
r Calas :

questionnaire (c'était l'homme destiné à ce triste minis-  
sait avaler au patient, au moyen d'une corne creuse de  
'on lui mettait dans la bouche, quatre pintes d'eau pour  
ion ordinaire et huit pour l'extraordinaire. Il s'arrêtait,  
s du chirurgien présent si la victime faiblissait, et dans  
rvalles le juge interrogeait l'accusé... Le patient res-  
t à un cétaqué, rendant l'eau par toutes les ouvertures de  
ps, nous dit un vieux procès-verbal de torture. (De Bas-  
I., p. 419.)

enfin en quoi consistait le supplice de la roue. « Le  
né était attaché à plat, et la face contre terre, sur une  
saint André à laquelle on avait fait, sur chaque branche,  
tailles ou coches. Le bourreau, armé d'une barre de fer  
d'un pouce d'épaisseur, en donnait un coup sur chaque  
, à l'endroit des entailles, où les os, portant à faux, étaient  
blement cassés.

corps du condamné, replié sur lui-même, de manière que  
is touchassent au derrière de la tête, était ensuite atta-  
une petite roue de carrosse fixée horizontalement sur un  
(Bastard, I, p. 426). — Ajoutons que la roue se trouvait  
vée de quelques pieds au-dessus du plancher de l'écha-

#### LE DOCTEUR SOL ET SA FAMILLE.

Sol était né à Saverdun (Ariège), d'une famille espagnole  
dans le comté de Foix. L'aïeul maternel du docteur était  
maréchal de Seigné, au service d'Autriche, un des offi-  
tingués que la révocation de l'édit de Nantes donna aux  
étrangères. Son petit-fils fit à Montpellier de fortes étu-  
laissa la réputation d'un grand zèle pour le travail, d'un  
ès-remarquable par sa précision et sa solidité. Il avait  
ord l'intention de prendre du service comme médecin  
en Allemagne. Mais il renonça à ce projet, et lorsque  
es furent terminées, il commença par exercer la méde-

cine à Saverdun. Il épousa, bientôt après, une demoiselle Vaïsse de Caraman. De ce mariage naquirent deux fils, dont l'un le général Pierre Sol Beauclair, est mort en 1814, dans la place de Bayonne qu'il commandait et qui était assiégée par les Anglais.

Le second fils du docteur Jacques Sol, officier du génie, fut en 1779 attaché officiellement à la personne de l'ambassadeur de États-Unis, qui était alors Franklin. Après avoir été chef d'état major de l'armée des Pyrénées-Orientales, il acheva ses jours à Toulouse, où il fut jusqu'à sa mort en 1820, membre du consistoire.

Longtemps avant que l'Église de Toulouse fût rétablie, le docteur leur père avait été un des fondateurs d'une association qui sans en prendre le nom, était véritablement une église protestante. Voici comment il avait été amené à se fixer dans cette ville.

Une épidémie qui ravagea le Languedoc et particulièrement Toulouse, avait fait sortir le jeune médecin protestant d'une obscurité à laquelle les lois alors régnaient semblaient le condamner irrévocablement. Les notables de Toulouse envoyèrent quelques-uns d'entre eux chercher à Montpellier des secours contre la suette. La Faculté réunie leur indiqua le docteur Sol, qui vint arriver à Saverdun une députation des principaux habitants de Toulouse, le suppliant de venir s'établir, au moins momentanément, au milieu d'eux. Il y consentit, mais avec l'intention arrêtée de retourner à Saverdun. Il eut de si brillants succès dans ce champ de travail plus considérable qu'il ne s'en éloigna plus. C'est qui prouve l'éclat tout à fait exceptionnel de sa réputation, car qu'il devint, quoique protestant, le médecin de l'Archevêché, par suite, de plusieurs couvents, circonstance extrêmement remarquable et sans doute unique à cette époque.

Il a laissé une grande renommée de bonté et de dévouement. Il fut, dit-on, le premier à instituer des consultations gratuites pour les indigents. Il mourut à Toulouse à l'âge de quatre-vingt-quatre ans.

Il avait dû, comme tant d'autres, se faire délivrer un certificat de catholicité pour être reçu docteur ; mais ces formalités légales ne trompaient plus personne ; les lettres même de sa sœur Fraisse<sup>1</sup> nous prouvent qu'il était resté protestant, et ce pour tel, jusque dans les couvents dont il était le médecin.

1. Lettres XXIII et suivantes.

assure, et nous n'avons pas de peine à le croire, qu'il s'intéressa activement à la famille Calas.

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## 21

(Page 218)

## DE VÉGOBRE.

Charles de Manoel de Végobre, né à la Salle, le 20 août 1713, mort le 25 octobre 1801 à Genève, où il s'était réfugié depuis longtemps pour cause de religion. Cet homme excellent fut un des appuis les plus fermes des *Églises sous la croix*. Il les protégea activement du fond de sa retraite et légua à son fils le zèle le plus éclairé et le plus soutenu pour la cause protestante en France. Ce fils mourut en 1840 et donna par testament sa bibliothèque aux jeunes Français qui étudient la théologie à Genève. J'ai été chargé, comme leur bibliothécaire à cette époque, de recevoir en leur nom ce don généreux, le dernier témoignage d'un dévouement héréditaire à la France et à l'Église réformée.

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## 22

(Page 218)

## RIBOTTE-CHARON.

Les lettres de Voltaire à Ribotte ont été publiées, ainsi qu'une lettre de Rousseau adressée au même, dans le *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français*, t. IV, p. 239. Je dois à M. Ch. Read les détails inédits qui suivent sur ce personnage digne d'intérêt.

Il naquit au Carla-le-Comte (pays de Foix) l'an 1730, et s'occupait du commerce des draps, dans lequel il fit une fortune assez considérable, qu'il perdit plus tard. Ses affaires et ses goûts l'appelèrent en Angleterre, en Hollande, en Espagne. Il résida souvent à Paris, où il voyait habituellement Buffon, Thomas, Necker, Bailly et surtout Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Il profita de ses voyages pour se créer une collection d'objets d'art; on se souvient qu'il commanda un tableau à Carle Vanloo. Il publia en 1787

une lettre à Buffon, sur les maladies épidémiques. On a encore lui un écrit sur la nature et l'origine du blé-froment, un poë sur les beaux-arts et un recueil d'hymnes patriotiques pour fêtes nationales de 1789-1790. Ribotte mourut au commencement du siècle.

Il est intéressant de voir le goût des lettres et des beaux-arts se relever ainsi, parmi les protestants de France, dès que la persécution se calma assez pour leur laisser quelque loisir et quelque aisance.

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 23

(Page 229)

## ÉLIE DE BEAUMONT.

Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Élie de Beaumont, avocat, né en 1732 à Carentan, mourut à Paris le 10 janvier 1786.

La part brillante qu'il prit à l'affaire Calas lui valut, parmi protestants, une vive gratitude et partout une haute renommée.

Mais, peu après, il se fit grand tort dans l'opinion en réclamant, du chef de sa femme, qui était née protestante, la terre Canon, près de Caen, qui avait été vendue par ses parents. Il se fit mettre en possession de cette terre, au nom d'une des lois odieuses destinées à empêcher l'émigration des huguenots; Louis XIV leur avait interdit d'aliéner leurs biens-fonds. Mais déjà ces lois tombaient en désuétude, et l'on fut indigné de voir demander la mise à exécution par le défenseur de Calas, dans un intérêt purement personnel. (Voir sur cette humiliante affaire les lettres de Voltaire à Damilaville, des 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 1766 et 4 juin 1767.)

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 24

(Page 232)

## LA DUCHESSE D'ANVILLE.

Le duché de la Rochefoucauld était tombé en quenouille. La branche aînée, qui avait eu pour chefs le second martyr de la

**Saint-Barthélemy** et plus tard l'auteur des *Maximes*, n'avait d'autre héritier que deux filles. On les maria à deux de leurs cousins, d'une branche cadette, les ducs d'Anville et d'Estissac.

Mme d'Anville était l'aînée; elle est connue pour sa bienfaisance, les tendances libérales de son esprit, ses relations littéraires avec Voltaire et les encyclopédistes. « Flattez sa grande passion qui est celle de faire du bien, » dit Voltaire à Moulton; et il ajoute : « Elle est capable d'aller exprès à Versailles. » Elle vint à Genève pour propager, par son exemple, une invention encore fort contestée, l'inoculation; elle fit inoculer ses filles par Tronchin. Voltaire lui prêta à cette occasion sa maison des *Délices*. Il l'intéressa vivement aux Calas; il arriva même qu'elle comprit, beaucoup mieux que le vieux célibataire de Ferney, les douleurs maternelles de Mme Calas. Elle était femme et mère; elle avait des filles. Ce fut elle qui fit rendre ses deux filles à Mme Calas; démarche que Voltaire trouvait imprudente, craignant d'exaspérer le personnage puissant qui avait obtenu les deux lettres de cachet. « Quiconque a donné une lettre de cachet veut la soutenir (V. notre recueil p. 92). » Il se doutait bien que c'était Saint-Florentin, mais n'en convenait pas, de peur d'inquiéter les partisans des Calas.

Mme d'Anville n'eut qu'un fils, le duc de la Rochefoucauld, qui en 1789 fut tué à Gisors.

Le titre de duc de la Rochefoucauld passa alors au fils de Mme d'Estissac, très-connu sous la Restauration par sa philanthropie et son libéralisme.

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## 25

(Page 235)

DIDEROT.

Diderot, peu content des consultations et mémoires d'Élie de Beaumont et autres, a esquissé, à grands traits dans une lettre, ce qu'il eût dit s'il avait eu à défendre Calas. Il indique deux faits dont on n'a pas assez tiré parti. Le premier, c'est la longue vie sans reproche de Calas. Le second, c'est sa mort :

« Si cet homme a tué son fils, de crainte qu'il ne changeât de religion, c'est un fanatique; c'est un des fanatiques les plus vio-



lents qu'il soit possible d'imaginer. Il croit en Dieu ; il aime sa religion plus que sa vie, plus que la vie de son fils ; il aime son fils mort qu'apostat : il faut donc regarder son crime comme une action héroïque, son fils comme un holocauste qu'il offre à son Dieu. Quel doit donc être son discours et quel a été son discours des autres fanatiques ? Le voilà : « Oui, j'ai tué n... »  
 « oui, messieurs, si c'était à recommencer, je le tuerais encore »  
 « j'ai mieux aimé plonger ma main dans son sang que de tendre à renier son culte ; si c'est un crime, je l'ai commis »  
 « me traîne au supplice ! » Au contraire, Calas protestait de son innocence : il prend Dieu à témoin ; il regarde sa mort comme le châtement de quelque faute inconnue et secrète ; il veut être jugé de son Dieu aussi sévèrement qu'il l'a été des hommes ; il est coupable du crime dont il est accusé. Il appelle son fils un crime ; il attend ses juges au grand jour pour les y confondre. S'il est coupable, il ment à la face du ciel et de la terre ; il ment au dernier moment ; il se condamne à des peines éternelles : il est donc athée..., mais, athée, il n'est plus fanatique : il n'a donc plus tué son fils. Choisissez, aurais-je dit aux juges..., etc. »

(*Mém. et Corr.*, 1834, t. II, p. 40)

Ce n'était pas la première fois que Diderot, dans une confidence intime, laissait paraître son opinion sur les Calas.

« Vous êtes étonnée de l'atrocité de ce jugement de T... »  
 écrivait-il à Mlle Voland (*Mém. et Corr.*, etc., 1834, t. II, p. 40).  
 Mais songez que les prêtres avaient inhumé le fils comme un saint et que s'ils avaient absous le père, il aurait fallu extraire de la terre et traîner sur la claie le prétendu martyr. »

#### L'ABBÉ AUDRA.

Après avoir fait connaître des membres du clergé de Toulouse aveuglément passionnés et très-peu charitables, aimons à montrer dans la même ville un prêtre plus juste et plus doux.

L'abbé Audra, baron de Saint-Just, était chanoine de l'église de Saint-Jacques.

pole et professeur d'histoire au collège royal de Toulouse. « Son libéralisme, dit M. C. Rabaut (*Sirven*, p. 130), lui attira tant de chagrins qu'il en mourut. »

Il est certain tout au moins qu'il s'était efforcé de réagir contre le fanatisme toulousain et d'éclairer l'opinion publique (*Bulletin de la Société d'histoire du Protestantisme*, t. IV. p. 7). Il passa pour avoir réussi à obtenir du parlement de Toulouse de reconnaître en 1769 comme valide, sur un certificat de Paul Rabaut, le mariage protestant d'un nommé Roubel, qui venait de mourir et dont les collatéraux voulaient dépouiller la veuve. La joie qu'eurent de cet acte de justice les protestants de Provence et de Languedoc, espérant voir enfin légitimer leur état civil et le ministère de leurs pasteurs « fut si vive et se manifesta par des jouissances si publiques qu'elle fut dénoncée au prince de Beauveau, gouverneur, comme *séditieuse*. » (*Borrel, Histoire de l'Église de Nîmes*, 2<sup>e</sup> édit., p. 439.)

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## 27

(Page 268)

### SITUATION FINANCIÈRE DE LA FAMILLE CALAS.

Le 3 septembre 1763, le syndic des créanciers de Calas obtint un arrêt qui constata leurs droits et les intérêts des sommes qui leur étaient dues. Cette pièce se trouve aux Archives du Parlement, à Toulouse. Mme Calas figure sur la liste des créanciers (immédiatement après le boulanger, qui est inscrit le premier); il lui était dû dix mille livres pour sa dot, neuf cent quarante-quatre livres d'intérêts échus et sept cents livres de douaire annuel. On lui reconnut en outre une créance de deux mille quatre cent quarante-six livres, et soixante-seize livres d'intérêts, remboursables après paiement de tous les autres réclamants. Trois cent quatre-vingt-une livres étaient dues à Jeanne Viguiier pour ses gages.

Il paraît aussi, d'après un mot de la sœur Fraisse (Lettre n<sup>o</sup> VIII, 26 oct. 1763), qu'une somme de deux mille francs, appartenant aux deux jeunes filles, leur fut restituée.

Le passif de la maison se montait en tout à soixante-dix-neuf mille huit cent quatre-vingt-dix livres. Quant à l'actif, nous n'en

retrouvons pas le chiffre. Il est certain que bien des valeurs avaient disparu, que beaucoup d'objets et de papiers avaient été égarés, détruits ou dérobés, et que certaines créances, dont les titres ne se retrouvaient pas, furent niées.

Du procès criminel surgirent d'autres complications. Ainsi, pour constater ses droits, Mme Calas ne pouvait se passer, ni de son contrat de mariage, ni d'un billet par lequel son mari reconnaissait lui devoir deux mille quatre cents francs. Il fallut obtenir, le 23 août 1762, un jugement qui lui fit restituer ces deux pièces.

Pendant qu'elle poursuivait la réhabilitation de son mari et tâchait de rassembler quelques débris de leur modeste fortune, Mme Calas avait d'autres soucis encore. Sa sœur avait épousé un sieur Valette de Falgous, dit du Tomet, premier commis de la direction des gabelles à Bourges, qui ne cessait de réclamer pour sa fille le paiement de sept mille francs, restés dus sur la dot de sa femme. En vain sa belle-sœur Mme Calas lui répondait que son père, M. Cabibel, était mort chez elle à Toulouse, ayant pour toute ressource l'appui de son gendre et une pension alimentaire que lui accordait une maison de commerce pour laquelle il avait travaillé longtemps; en sorte qu'il n'avait laissé aucun bien. Falgous intenta à sa belle-sœur et aux héritiers de Jean Calas un procès qu'il perdit. Un an après le supplice de son beau-frère, il tourmenta encore la veuve, la menaçant de lui mettre sa fille entre les mains. Au milieu de toutes ses peines, la pauvre persécutée constitua à sa nièce, par-devant notaire, le 18 juillet 1774, une rente viagère de deux cents francs sur l'État; ce qui n'empêcha pas le sieur Falgous, huit jours après la réhabilitation du supplicié (le 17 mars 1765), de recommencer des menaces et des demandes nouvelles. Cette fois, après avoir consulté, elle refusa nettement. Est-il besoin de dire qu'un homme si âpre à la curée avait abjuré depuis longtemps la religion des persécutés?

Dès qu'elle eut quelque argent à sa disposition, Mme Calas donna à ses enfants le plus qu'elle put; à Pierre, pour commencer un commerce avec Donat, six mille francs; à Mme Duvoisin, en la mariant, six mille quatre cents francs; à Louis, toujours le plus exigeant, six mille cinq cent quarante-huit francs. Mais elle ne cessa de se défier de lui; car, dans son testament, elle lui substitua ses enfants nés ou à naître, et M. Dumas fut nommé *tuteur de la substitution* par un jugement en date du

juin 1792; le tribunal désignait trois des amis intimes de  
représenter la famille absente: ces amis, qui composaient ce  
qu'on appelle aujourd'hui le conseil de famille, étaient: le pas-  
teur Marrow, le docteur Varnum, MM. Mendenhall, Delapierre,  
Chaufrey, Étienne Faire, Thomas et Yessie. — Tous se refusèrent  
point avoir protesté contre ces actes, et il envoya lui-même de  
Londres sa procuration à Thomas pour le représenter lors de la  
mort de sa mère.

En 1755, il avait voulu contracter avec une jeune Comtesse un mariage auquel sa mère fit opposition devant le curé de Saint-Séverin. Nous ne savons ni le nom de la personne qu'il avait choisie à épouser, ni pourquoi sa mère refusa son consentement. Louis ne parait pas s'être marié.

A la mort de Mme Calas, la masse de ses biens, et ses actions étaient censés rapporter tout le profit et l'intérêt qui s'en serait élevée à cent cinquante mille francs. Les trois survivants se partageraient ce qui en restait.

2

**2015 248**

**SECRET**

Grinner se débattait avec un pain qui menaçait les pins étendus allongés, à cette heure d'été, et les autres. Il était si fatigué qu'il ne pouvait pas se lever avec un peu de sang. Dans la correspondance littéraire du 15 avril 1913, il avait écrit après la publication de Calais. Il s'adressait à son ami Camille, comme lui à la maison d'Orléans.

e M. de Cartonnelle. Il est le plus grand de M. de la Roche de la Roche.  
sans être un académicien profond comme il est l'academicien d'un  
mont et de la Roche: il est si grand sans, que la Roche de la Roche.

1. Voir : 1° les lettres de TROUSSE à CAMILLEILLE. 1745. 21 avril 21 mai  
22 mai 3 juin 4 novembre. 22 mai 21 juillet. 13 mai 13 mai — à DU-  
PONT. 1745. 14 septembre. — à L'ÉPISCOPAL. 1745. 22 septembre et 1 oct.  
2 octobre. — à CAMILLE. 1745. 4 octobre.

1- La correspondance de l'année 1955. 2- L'année 1956. 3- L'année 1957.

3. **Examination.** 12 11 1955

l'esprit et le caractère d'une figure, et c'est ce qui suffit à notre projet. Il a fait le tableau de toute la famille Calas<sup>1</sup>. »

Il alla le 9 mars dessiner leurs portraits à la Conciergerie, où ils avaient dû se constituer prisonniers pour attendre l'arrêt des maîtres des requêtes. Mme Calas est assise, avec sa fille aînée à son côté : Nanette est debout derrière elle, mais ne ressemble guère à une Vierge du Guide, quoi qu'en dise le baron de Grimm, enthousiaste de sa grâce et de sa beauté. Jeanne, debout, auprès de sa maîtresse, écoute la lecture que leur fait Gaubert Lavaysse du dernier Mémoire écrit pour leur défense par Élie de Beaumont. Pierre, vêtu de deuil comme ses sœurs et sa mère, lit par-dessus l'épaule de son ami. On proposa d'abord cette gravure au célèbre J.-G. Wille, qui refusa. Il dit dans son Journal<sup>2</sup> à la date du 20 avril 1765 : « M. Grimm, secrétaire du duc d'Orléans, m'écrivit une lettre dans laquelle il me proposa, au nom d'une société d'honnêtes gens qui veut faire la dépense, de graver la famille infortunée de Calas en six figures dessinées par M. Carmontelle ; mais je me suis excusé, par une réponse que j'ai faite sur-le-champ à mon compatriote M. Grimm. » Quel fut le motif de ce refus ? Des occupations trop nombreuses ? Mais M. H. Vienne a remarqué qu'on ne trouve en 1765, dans l'œuvre de Wille<sup>3</sup> qu'une pièce importante, l'*Instruction paternelle* de Terburg. Fut-ce la crainte de se compromettre ou la médiocrité du dessin de Carmontelle qui fit reculer le burin de l'artiste ? Quoi qu'il en soit, sur le refus de Wille, on eut recours au reproducteur habituel des profils de Carmontelle, Delafosse, graveur moins ha-

1. La Beaumelle fit les vers suivants pour être mis au bas de l'estampe. Ils ont été imprimés sur une bande qui se trouve sur quelques exemplaires :

Tranquille, en un cachot attendre sa sentence,  
Par des arrêts de sang n'être pas abattu,  
C'est plaider pour Calas avec plus d'éloquence  
Que l'orateur sublime armé pour sa défense.

Il n'appartient qu'à la vertu  
De demander des fers pour venger l'innocence.  
L'orateur sublime est Élie de Beaumont.

La plupart des exemplaires portent ces vers de Lucrèce :

Qualibus in tenebris vitæ quantisque periclis  
Degitur hoc ævi quodcumque est.

2. Journal de J.-G. Wille, publié par G. Duplessis. Paris, 1857, t. I, p. 287.

3. Catalogue de l'œuvre de Wille, par Ch. Le Blanc. Leipzig, 1847.

bile, qui ne fit qu'un ouvrage de peu de valeur. La planche fut offerte à Mme Calas. On obtint pour cette gravure le privilège du roi <sup>1</sup>, et l'on publia un prospectus sous le titre de : *Projet de souscription pour une estampe tragique et morale* <sup>2</sup>. Un notaire fut chargé de recevoir les fonds. L'exemplaire coûtait un écu de six livres.

Voltaire applaudit à ce projet, souscrivit aussitôt pour douze exemplaires <sup>3</sup> et recueillit à Genève 1000 écus de souscriptions. Il en parle souvent dans ses lettres, quelquefois pour critiquer le dessin; mais quand il reçut l'estampe, il y baisa au travers du verre les figures de Mme Calas et de ses filles, puis il la suspendit au chevet de son lit, à la place où les catholiques mettent un bénitier ou un crucifix. Elle y demeura toute sa vie; et on peut l'y voir représentée dans les gravures indiquées à la Bibliographie, sous le n° 133. Il écrivait à Mme Calas, le 17 janvier 1768 : « Le premier objet que je verrai en m'éveillant sera la vertu persécutée et respectée <sup>4</sup>. » Il ajoute le 9 mai : « M. votre fils Pierre est très-ressemblant; je suis persuadé que vous l'êtes de même <sup>5</sup>. » Cette estampe, dont Voltaire parle avec tant de joie, excita le même enthousiasme au couvent de la Visitation. La sœur Fraisse, comme lui, l'attendit avec une vive impatience, la reçut avec les mêmes transports; elle la regardait souvent avec une

1. L'original, en parchemin, avec le sceau de cire jaune, est sous nos yeux; il est daté de Compiègne, le 7 août 1765, et autorise pour neuf années la vente de l'estampe. — Coll. de M. Fournier.

2. Voir Bibliographie n° 43 et, pour l'estampe, n° 126.

3. Lettre à Damilaville, 29 avril 1765.

Il eut l'idée assez étrange d'ajouter à la composition de Carmontelle la figure charmante de Donat, sollicitant à la porte de la prison auprès d'un conseiller du Parlement. Il prétendait que la douce et pure physionomie de cet enfant aiderait à persuader les juges de l'innocence de sa famille et intéresserait le public. Dans cette pensée il fit faire deux fois le portrait de Donat et se plaignit beaucoup du peintre Huber, qui, en voulant donner à son jeune modèle une expression de douleur et d'attendrissement, avait laissé échapper la ressemblance. Il envoya cependant cette peinture à ses amis de Paris, qui eurent le bon esprit de ne pas surcharger ainsi le projet primitif. (Lettres du 17 mars à Argental; des 20 et 22 mai à Damilaville, etc). Il paraît qu'il envoya l'autre portrait de Donat à Berlin où Chodowiecki s'en servit; ce fut d'après ce portrait et l'estampe, que cet artiste composa à Jean Calas une figure qui a été reproduite plusieurs fois. (Bibliogr., 127-130.) Mais comme il se trouve que tous les enfants de Mme Calas ressemblaient beaucoup à leur mère, rien ne garantit la ressemblance du portrait imaginaire de son mari.

4. Collection de M. Fournier. — 5. *Ibid.*

profonde et douce émotion et la montrait avec empressement à ses compagnes <sup>1</sup>.

Les rois de Prusse, de Pologne, de Danemark, le landgrave de Hesse, le margrave de Bade, la duchesse de Saxe-Gotha, les princesses de Darmstadt et de Nassau-Saarbruck, l'Electeur-Palatin Charles-Théodore, les maréchales duchesses de Luxembourg et de Mirepoix, la duchesse d'Anville, la princesse de Turenne, la duchesse douairière d'Aiguillon, se firent inscrire en tête de la liste. Mme d'Anville envoya cinquante louis pour un exemplaire. Le duc de Choiseul en donna cent pour deux exemplaires. On attendait un grand succès de cette œuvre de charité, également honorable pour tous, lorsque, tout à coup, la vente de l'estampe fut arrêtée par ordre supérieur.

Nous laisserons à la plume de Grimm le récit de cet incroyable réveil de l'intolérance :

« La souscription pour l'estampe de la famille Calas au profit des infortunés qui ont survécu à ses désastres, a été accueillie du public avec la chaleur et l'intérêt dont l'humanité et la compassion la plus juste lui faisaient une loi ; mais le sort qu'elle vient d'éprouver à Paris paraîtra incroyable, même à ceux qui connaissent le mieux les fureurs du fanatisme. A peine le projet de souscription, muni du sceau et de l'approbation de la police, favorisé par les noms les plus illustres de la France, était-il devenu public, que quelques conseillers de Parlement en ont été choqués, et qu'on a exigé du lieutenant de police de faire suspendre la souscription. Un des premiers magistrats du royaume a motivé la nécessité de cette suspension par les trois raisons suivantes : 1<sup>o</sup> parce que M. de Voltaire paraissait être le premier instigateur de cette souscription ; 2<sup>o</sup> parce que l'estampe était un monument injurieux au Parlement de Toulouse ; 3<sup>o</sup> parce que ce serait faire du bien à des protestants. Il ne faut se permettre aucun commentaire sur ces trois raisons ; car il est évident que ces messieurs veulent se conserver le droit de rouer les innocents ; mais il n'est pas moins incompréhensible qu'on ose empêcher la nation de suivre l'exemple de bonté que son roi lui a donné, et que, pour éviter un dégoût à sept ou huit officiers coupables d'un Parlement, on ose priver d'un secours nécessaire des innocents qui ont été si cruellement outragés, auxquels le roi a fait rendre justice par un jugement souverain rendu par près de cent juges,

1. Voir lettres 23 et suivantes.

après l'examen le plus rigoureux, et que Sa Majesté a enfin jugés dignes de ses bienfaits. On n'a pu mettre aucune forme ni judiciaire, ni extra-judiciaire à cette défense; car, sous quel prétexte empêcher la publication d'une estampe pour laquelle le roi a donné un privilège à Mme Calas, qui défend à tous ses sujets de la troubler dans le débit qu'elle jugera à propos d'en faire? C'est donc une violence arbitraire, et qui ne peut être justifiée par aucune loi; et c'est la magistrature qui se l'est permise en cette occasion! Si c'est là l'esprit public des pères de la patrie, qu'il doit paraître fatal et déplorable! On dit pourtant qu'on trouvera des moyens pour faire lever cette suspension; mais ceux qui n'ont pas eu assez de pudeur pour ne point ordonner une injustice aussi atroce, sauront bien la faire continuer.

« .... Il faut faire diversion aux réflexions affligeantes qui résultent de tous ces faits, par un fait dont j'ai eu le bonheur d'être témoin. La veille du jour que la suspension de la souscription a été ordonnée, André Souhert, maître maçon, arrive chez le notaire. « Est-ce ici, dit-il, qu'on souscrit pour Mme Calas? Je voudrais avoir quarante mille livres de rente pour les partager avec cette femme malheureuse; mais je n'ai que mon travail et sept enfants à nourrir; donnez-moi une souscription : voilà mon écu. »

Diderot avait prédit à Grimm que la souscription serait entravée, et peut-être Grimm, qui ne voulut pas l'en croire, a-t-il compromis son entreprise par le ton de son *Projet*, l'épigraphe empruntée à Lucrèce, et autres détails qui exaspérèrent le clergé et les magistrats <sup>1</sup>.

Cette défense, que nous soupçonnons fort le comte de Saint-Florentin d'avoir accordée avec empressement aux sollicitations de la magistrature, fut levée, mais au bout de sept ou huit mois<sup>2</sup>; l'ignoble but de cette vengeance mesquine fut atteint; il ne faut pas un si long délai pour que le zèle se refroidisse; la gravure fut moins répandue et la souscription moins considérable qu'elles ne l'auraient été. « L'injustice qu'on faisait à la famille des Calas de s'opposer au débit de son estampe, était encore, dit Voltaire, un vol manifeste<sup>3</sup>. » Il recommanda avec instances la souscription à ses correspondants couronnés et autres<sup>4</sup>. On a dit<sup>5</sup>

1. *Mém., Corr., etc.*, de Diderot, 1834, t. II, p. 255.

2. En mars 1776 (*Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont*, t. III, p. 13).

3. A d'Alembert, 28 aug. — 4. 4 oct., 3 janvier 1767, etc. etc.

5. Bachaumont.



que Catherine II avait envoyé cinq mille livres; ce qui a pu donner lieu à ce bruit, fondé ou non, c'est que Mme Calas reçut pareille somme, avec une lettre sans signature, d'un prétendu correspondant à Paris de la maison Clyfort d'Amsterdam <sup>1</sup>. Mais, dans cette lettre, où l'orthographe et la grammaire sont également maltraitées, à dessein ou non, il n'est pas question de l'estampe.

Une note, sans signature ni date, mais postérieure au mariage de Nanette Calas, informe sa mère qu'après avoir touché deux *parties traînantes* de la souscription, on a quinze cent soixante-dix-neuf livres huit sols à lui remettre. On espère recevoir encore d'autres sommes. (Ce billet est probablement de Grimm. *Coll. de M. Fournier.*)

A Londres, un banquier suisse, M. Josué Rougemont, frère de MM. Rougemont de Paris, aidé en Angleterre par un docteur Maty, en Écosse par un M. Balfour et par un M. Paumier à Dublin, plaça près de douze cents exemplaires, qui furent exemptés des droits d'entrée; ce banquier se montra fort zélé pour Mme Calas, et nous avons trouvé parmi les papiers de la veuve huit lettres chaleureuses de Rougemont; il lui envoya seize mille trois cent trente-huit francs produits par cette souscription. « Jouissez, lui écrivait le docteur Maty, du tribut commun que vous rendent toutes les nations. Il n'y en a point dont vous ne soyez devenue la compatriote, et chaque famille, chez nous, qui possède votre estampe, dit, autant par vanité peut-être que par attendrissement : Que n'est-elle Anglaise ! » (13 janv. 1767, *Coll. de M. Fournier.*)

Nous trouvons, dans la même collection, deux reçus en date du 8 août 1796, par lesquels M. de Lafosse reconnaît avoir reçu de M. Grimm, d'abord douze cents livres pour la gravure d'une deuxième planche de *la Famille Calas*, puis six cents livres pour avoir retouché la première.

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1. Clyfort est sans doute pour Clifford. Un employé de la maison n'eût pas estropié le nom. La lettre se trouve dans la Collection de M. Fournier.

## AFFAIRES COMMERCIALES DE PIERRE ET DE DONAT.

Nous soussignés, Pierre et Donat Calas frères, demeurant en cette ville, sommes convenus de nous associer pour toutes les affaires de commerce que nous pourrons entreprendre, et notamment pour une fabrique de bas de soye qui est déjà en train; et comme les fonds nécessaires doivent nous être fournis par M. Henry Cathala, aussi de cette ville, qui les tient à la disposition de notre famille protestante, par l'effet d'une souscription précédemment faite, nous reconnaissons que le susdit commerce et fabrique seront faits pour le compte de notre dite famille, quoyque la régie n'en soit faite que par nous deux, et que le bon ou mauvais succès sera commun à tous en proportion des besoins et selon le jugement qui en sera porté par notre chère et digne mère, qui sera toujours libre de prendre la majeure portion des profits, si profits il y a; les sentiments de respect et d'attachement que nous avons pour elle nous déterminent, sans aucune répugnance, de nous en remettre à cet égard à sa discrétion, et avec d'autant plus de raison que c'est l'avis de M. Cathala et de tous nos autres protecteurs, qui savent, comme nous, que la susdite souscription a été faite essentiellement en faveur de notre dite chère mère.

## ARTICLE PREMIER.

La Société roulera, à commencer de ce jour, sous le nom de Pierre et Donat Calas frères, et durera six années consécutives. Pendant tout son cours, ces deux régisseurs auront également la signature, dont ils ne pourront jamais faire usage que pour les affaires de la Société, et jamais, ny l'un, ni l'autre, pour compte particulier; ils ne pourront pas non plus faire aucune affaire que pour le profit commun.

## ART. 2.

Le fonds capital de ladite Société sera de huit mille deux cent quatre-vingt-deux livres quinze sols et neuf deniers courants, et fourni par M. Henry Cathala, qui en est le dépositaire, comme il est dit en l'autre part, lequel fonds appartient en commun à la susdite famille protestante Calas, qui, de son côté, rapportera les

sommes qui luy auront resté des souscriptions faites en France après l'entière définition du procès contre le parlement de Toulouze, pour le tout ne faire qu'une masse qui servira d'abord à augmenter le commerce et à le faire fructifier, et demeurera entre les mains des gérants, pour y rester au profit commun ou être partagé, si mieux on l'estime.

## ART. 3.

Pierre et Donat Calas pourront prélever chacun, sur les profits, la somme de cent cinquante livres courtes pour nourriture et entretien, ce qui sera passé au débit des frais de commerce; ainsi que le loyer de maison et autres dépenses communes pour la Société.

## ART. 4.

Seront obligés, lesdits Pierre et Donat Calas, de tenir un journal et un grand-livre en parties doubles, livre de caisse, de copie de lettres et autres livres propres, nécessaires et accoutumés pour le commerce et pour la fabrique singulièrement, et seront aussi tenus lesdits gérants de fournir tous les ans un inventaire détaillé de tous les effets de la Société et un bilan de grand-livre.

## ART. 5.

En cas qu'il arrive, pendant la présente Société ou lors de sa dissolution, quelques différends entre nous ou quelqu'un de notre famille, nous promettons de nous en rapporter à MM. Cayla, Riquès, Cathala, De Végobre (?) et Debrus, nos amis et protecteurs et si, par l'événement de mort, maladie ou absence, le nombre se réduisait à un, celui-ci pourra se nommer un adjoint, et les deux ensemble un sur-arbitre, si le besoin y est, nous soumettant dès à présent à leur décision comme à un arrêt de cour souveraine.

## ART. 6.

Et afin qu'il plaise à Dieu de bénir la présente Société, il a été convenu entre nous qu'il sera donné en aumônes, chacun an, une pistole de Genève des deniers de la Société, à telles personnes que nous jugerons en avoir le plus de besoin, et ce d'un commun consentement <sup>1</sup>.

1. La naïveté de rédaction de cet article peut faire sourire, ainsi que la modicité de la somme (d'après la plus forte évaluation une pistole valait 81 fr. 51 c.); mais nous trouvons ici l'excellente habitude de

## ART. 7.

Promettons en outre l'un et l'autre de maintenir le présent traité, sans aucune innovation, en toutes les clauses et conditions y mentionnées, priant Dieu qu'il bénisse la présente Société.

Fait quadruple des présentes, pour un être délivré à notre chère mère, un à M. Cathala, et un à chacun de nous, à Genève, le quinze septembre mille sept cent soixante-trois.

*Ont signé : Pierre CALAS et Donat CALAS.  
(Collection de M. Fournier.)*

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## 30

(Page 276)

## LA POSTÉRITÉ DE PIERRE CALAS.

Il nous avait paru convenable, dans notre première édition, de ne pas pousser plus loin l'histoire des descendants de Calas. Nous n'avions pas le droit de faire passer dans le domaine public la vie toute privée d'un vieillard sans enfants, descendant de Pierre Calas et du martyr, dernier représentant aujourd'hui de cette famille et devenu catholique.

Mais nous n'avons aucun motif pour ne pas reproduire dans cet ouvrage, l'avis suivant qui a été publié dans le *Journal de Genève* du 23 décembre 1859, par la personne même que nous avons laissée dans l'ombre. Cette note suffit, et nous n'y joindrons aucun commentaire.

« Nous soussignés, Calas (Jean-Philippe-François), et ma fille adoptive, Fanny Maigre-Calas, donnons connaissance au public que M. l'abbé Delajoux (Joseph-Antoine), curé de Pougny (Ain), ayant terminé sa mission dans notre maison, et étant dans l'intention de faire des affaires pour son compte, nous le déchargeons de tous les pouvoirs dont nous l'avions investi en vertu de procurations, et déclarons que dès ce jour nous regarderons comme nuls et sans effets tous les actes qui ne seraient pas revêtus de

vieilles maisons protestantes de prélever une part pour les pauvres sur tout revenu ou bénéfice, même éventuel.

notre signature, voulant à l'avenir régir nos affaires par nous-mêmes.

« Quintal, près d'Annecy, en Savoie,  
le 17 décembre 1859.

Jean-Philippe-François CALAS.  
Fanny MAIGRE-CALAS. »

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31

(Page 279)

ANECDOTE AU SUJET DE DAVID DE BEAUDRIGUE.

On a rapporté avec diverses variantes l'anecdote qui suit. Nous la donnons textuellement, telle que l'a écrite pour nous, après la première publication de ce livre, feu M. Moquin-Tandon, de l'Institut, arrière-petit-fils, par sa mère, de l'astronome dont il y est question.

« L'Observatoire de la ville de Montpellier, dont Barthélemy Tandon était directeur, communiquait avec sa maison par une terrasse établie sur le mur de ville.

« David de Baudrigue se présenta, un jour, pour visiter cet Observatoire. Barthélemy Tandon se trouvait dans une salle, en robe de chambre et en pantoufles. Le Capitoul prit notre astronome pour un concierge, et lui adressa plusieurs questions impertinentes, du ton d'un grand seigneur ignorant et dédaigneux. Il y avait, dans un coin de la salle, la belle lunette, donnée à la ville de Montpellier par le gouverneur de la Province. Le Capitoul demanda : — *Quel est ce long tuyau de poêle ?* — *Monsieur,* répondit le prétendu concierge, *c'est une lunette d'approche avec laquelle on voit très distinctement l'ame de Calas en Paradis !* — Baudrigue recula, rouge de colère. — *Apprenez, l'ami,* s'écria-t-il, *que je suis un des premiers Capitouls de Toulouse.* — *Et, à votre tour, sachez,* reprit Tandon, *que je suis le Directeur de l'Observatoire de Montpellier et que je ne suis pas votre ami !*

« Le Magistrat Toulousain alla porter plainte à l'Intendant de la Province. Celui ci promit la punition de l'irrévérent Directeur, et, le soir, en homme d'esprit, il fit souper ensemble le Capitoul et l'astronome. »

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## 32

(Page 385)

## MADEMOISELLE DE NAUTONNIER.

Nous avons rencontré souvent dans les *Dépêches du Secrétariat* le nom de cette jeune fille; son histoire est un exemple, entre mille, de tous les détails où entraient l'inflexible despotisme que les lois et l'administration faisaient peser sur les familles protestantes. Elle avait été enlevée par lettre de cachet et enfermée au couvent des *Dames Régentes* de Castres. Le seul crime de ses parents était leur religion. Les *Dames Régentes* convertirent la jeune fille au catholicisme; mais il ne paraît pas que ce fut par des moyens très-doux, puisqu'elle demanda à plusieurs reprises d'être transférée ailleurs. Elle eut ou feignit d'avoir quelque intention de se faire religieuse, mais dans une autre maison, et adressa des suppliques en ce sens au comte de Saint-Florentin; elle tentait en même temps d'obtenir de lui qu'il la rendit à ses parents.

Il décida, le 7 août 1762, qu'elle quitterait le couvent de Castres pour celui des Visitandines de Toulouse. Mais il déclara qu'elle ne retournerait point au sein de sa famille, toute convertie qu'elle était, « ses parents étant capables d'employer les voyes les plus violentes pour lui faire adopter leurs sentiments. » Ce qui signifie que le Ministre connaissait fort bien le peu de sincérité des conversions qu'il arrachait par lettres de cachet à de jeunes protestantes. Il ne restait à Mlle de Nautonnier qu'un seul moyen de sortir de prison, épouser un catholique. Elle s'y décida. Un mariage fut arrangé pour elle avec un sieur de Ville-neuve de la Croisille. Sa famille y consentit. Le 3 août 1763, le Ministre envoya, non à elle, mais à l'Évêque de Castres, un ordre du Roi pour la mettre en liberté, en vue de ce mariage; il ajoute : « Vous voudrez bien me le renvoyer si le mariage venait à manquer. »

Mais ce n'était pas tout; les protestants, ou comme on disait alors, les *nouveaux convertis* ne pouvaient vendre leurs terres sans autorisation du Roi, et M. de Nautonnier, n'ayant point d'argent comptant, dut solliciter du ministre la permission de vendre une partie de ses biens pour payer, à ce gendre que ni lui ni sa fille n'avaient choisi, la dot sans laquelle elle serait

restée recluse toute sa vie, comme un grand nombre de ses compagnes. Le Ministre voulut bien accorder cette grâce, sur la recommandation de M. l'Évêque de Castres, que ce malheureux père avait dû commencer par se rendre favorable. En donnant l'autorisation le 14 août, M. de Saint-Florentin écrivit à la fois à l'Évêque et à M. de Saint-Priest, intendant de la province, et chargea ce dernier de veiller à ce que le produit de la vente fût réellement employé à la dot convenue.

On conçoit facilement ce que pouvaient être des ventes de biens-fonds où le vendeur était si peu libre. Tout le monde connaissait sa position et en abusait. Aussi en septembre 1764, M. de Villeneuve écrit encore au Ministre pour le prier d'autoriser Mme de Nautonnier à vendre une ferme pour le paiement de la dot de sa fille.

Ajoutons à ce récit que la famille de Nautonnier était noble et considérable, qu'elle avait à Paris ou à Versailles une parente, la marquise de Valcourt, qui sollicitait sans cesse pour elle auprès du Ministre. C'est malgré ces circonstances favorables et rares, que M. de Nautonnier voyait l'éducation, l'établissement de sa fille et ses propres affaires gouvernés par des Religieuses et par un Évêque; et cela, en dépit de tout ce qu'ils firent, elle et lui, contre leur conscience, pour obtenir les bonnes grâces des représentants d'une Eglise qui n'était pas la leur.

On peut juger de ce qui arrivait à des familles moins protégées, et plus fidèles à leurs convictions.

#### LE PASTEUR DUVOISIN.

Duvoisin avait été pasteur de l'Eglise Wallonne de Bois-le-Duc du 4 avril 1749 au 5 avril 1759, jour où il fut nommé par les États-Généraux deuxième pasteur ou Chapelain de la Chapelle de Leurs Hautes Puissances à Paris. Le 11 février 1768 il reçut le titre de chapelain perpétuel de l'ambassade. Il avait épousé en premières noces Marie-Françoise Le Fauconnier de Caen, dont il eut une fille, Amélie-Marthe, née le 21 juin 1764. J'ai sous les yeux l'acte de baptême de cette enfant; elle eut pour parrains

S. Exc. M. Lestevenon, ambassadeur des États-Généraux, et M. Samuël Le Chambrier, colonel d'un régiment suisse, réformé, de son nom, au service de LL. HH. PP., pour marraines la comtesse de Limburgh-Bronckhorst-Styrum, et M<sup>lle</sup> Marthe Gambier, sa grand'tante maternelle. (Dépôt de l'état civil à Paris.)

Voici, sur chacun des mariages du pasteur Duvoisin, des documents curieux par l'idée qu'ils donnent de la tyrannie qui pesait en France sur les protestants.

## I. Pièces relatives au premier mariage de Duvoisin.

1. — M. DE S<sup>t</sup> FLORENTIN A M. LE DUC DE PRASLIN, MINISTRE  
DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES.

6 avril 1763.

J'ai reçu, M. la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire au sujet du mariage que la D<sup>lle</sup> Fauconnier veut contracter avec le S<sup>r</sup> Du Voisin, Chapelain de l'Ambassade des Etats-Généraux. Ce n'est pas certainement, sur l'exposition d'un pareil projet, qu'elle a obtenu le brevet qui lui permet de dénaturer ses biens et à la faveur duquel elle pourra<sup>1</sup> en emporter le prix en pays étranger, lorsqu'elle aurait épousé le S<sup>r</sup> Du Voisin et qu'il se retireroit soit en Hollande soit dans sa patrie. Ainsy je crois pouvoir considérer ce brevet comme obtenu par surprise. A l'égard du mariage que la D<sup>lle</sup> Fauconnier veut contracter avec le S<sup>r</sup> Du Voisin, il y a des exemples, quoique rares, de permissions accordées par le Roi à des Françaises d'épouser des Etrangers. Et sous ce point de vue, rien ne sembleroit pouvoir empêcher S. M. de permettre le mariage en question. Mais d'un autre côté, les Ordonnances du Roy ainsi que les Edits et Déclarations concernant la R. P. R. enjoignent à tous les sujets de S. M. d'observer dans les mariages qu'ils veulent contracter les solennités prescrites par les loix de l'Eglise et de l'Etat. Or, S. M. ne pourroit permettre à la D<sup>lle</sup> Fauconnier d'épouser un ministre, sans donner atteinte à des loix aussi essentielles, puisque ce serait consentir à leur violement. La célébration, qui doit sans doute se faire du mariage, dans la chapelle de l'ambassadeur de Hollande

1. On avait écrit d'abord : *elle a eu pour but de pouvoir*. Ces mots sont biffés.



à la manière des Réformés serait encore une infraction à ces mêmes loix ; et je suis persuadé que si M. l'Archevêque de Paris en avoit connaissance, il ne manquerait pas de s'en plaindre. Voilà, Monsieur, les réflexions que je crois pouvoir faire sur la permission qui vous est demandée. Vous en ferez tel usage que vous jugerez à propos.

2. — EXTRAIT D'UNE SECONDE LETTRE DU MÊME AU MÊME.

..... A l'égard de l'effet que pourrait produire en Hollande, par rapport aux Catholiques, le refus de la permission demandée par la D<sup>lle</sup> Fauconnier, je doute fort qu'il y ait lieu d'en craindre aucun fâcheux. Les Etats-Généraux pourraient se porter à gêner les mariages des Cath. établis sous leur domination, si le Roi par quelque loi générale imposait un nouveau joug aux protestants de son Roy<sup>e</sup>. Mais le refus de la permission en question est fondé sur des loix aussi anciennes qu'essentielles ; et je ne saurois présumer que les Etats G. voulussent venger un refus aussi légitime fait à un simple particulier, sur nombre infini de leurs sujets, qu'il est d'ailleurs de leur Politique de ne pas forcer à sortir de leurs Terres par des rigueurs mal-entendues dans une matière aussi délicate que celle des mariages.

Au surplus, M., cette affaire est par sa nature trop importante pour que je prenne sur moi de rien proposer à S. M. sur ce sujet. Et je crois ne pouvoir me dispenser d'en rendre compte à S. M. dans son conseil.

## II. Pièces relatives au second mariage de Duvoisin.

1. PLACET A MONSIEUR LE DUC DE CHOISEUL, MINISTRE DES  
AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES <sup>1</sup>.

Monseigneur !

Le Sieur Jean Jacques Duvoisin, Suisse de nation, Chapelain perpétuel de l'ambassade de Hollande, remontre très humblement à Votre Grandeur, qu'il a formé le projet d'épouser la D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas, fille cadette de Jean Calas Marchand à Toulouse, dont les malheurs et l'innocence reconnue authentiquement par un juge-

1. Cette pièce et les deux suivantes sont tirées des Archives des Pays-Bas à la Haye.

ment solennel, ont excité une si grande sensation dans l'Europe, et dont la famille a reçu des marques si consolantes des bontés de Sa Majesté.

La D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Rose Cabibel, mère de la future, est disposée à consentir à ce mariage. Mais, remplie des sentiments de la plus vive et de la plus respectueuse reconnoissance des bienfaits qu'elle a reçus de son Souverain, elle désire avant toutes choses que Sa Majesté veuille bien approuver ce mariage qui convient d'ailleurs de part et d'autre ; et en ce cas, comme le suppliant est sujet d'une Puissance étrangère, elle supplie Sa Majesté d'avoir la bonté de mettre sa fille à l'abri des dangers qu'elle pourroit courir d'après les loix reçues en France, qui défendent aux naturels François de se marier en pays étrangers, ou même de s'y retirer.

A ces causes, Monseigneur ! plaise à Votre Grandeur expédier un Brevet par lequel Sa Majesté donnera son agrément au mariage projeté entre le suppliant et la d. D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas, née Française, et faisant profession de la Religion Protestante ; en conséquence autorisera la d. D<sup>lle</sup> Calas à jouir, faire et disposer de tous ses biens présens et avenir, et exercer tous ses droits et actions en France, nonobstant toutes Ordonnances, Edits, Déclarations, Arrêts et Réglemens à ce contraires, de la rigueur desquels il plaira à Sa Majesté relever et dispenser la d. D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas aud. cas de mariage et sans tirer à conséquence. Et le Suppliant ne cessera jamais de faire des vœux pour la conservation de Votre Grandeur.

(La même grâce a été accordée à MM. d'Erlach et Thélusson.)

N. B. *Ce Placet a été présenté à M. le Duc de Choiseul par S. E. M. de Berkenroode, le mardi 27 janvier 1767.*

## 2. — A M. DE BERKENROODE.

A Versailles, le 1<sup>er</sup> février 1767.

Monsieur,

Sur le compte que j'ai rendu au Roi du mémoire que V<sup>e</sup> Ex<sup>ce</sup> m'a remis, à l'effet d'obtenir de Sa Majesté, en faveur du S<sup>r</sup> Jean Jacques Duvoisin la permission d'épouser la D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas, le Roi a bien voulu autoriser ce mariage et je joins ici le brevet que

Sa Majesté m'a ordonné de faire expédier en conséquence. J'ai l'honneur d'être avec une parfaite considération

Monsieur

De V<sup>re</sup> Exce

Très humble et très obéissant serviteur  
le Duc DE CHOISEUL.

3. — BREVET DE SA MAJESTÉ TRÈS CHRÉTIENNE PORTANT PERMISSION DE SE MARIER EN FAVEUR DU S<sup>r</sup> JEAN JACQUES DUVOISIN AVEC LA D<sup>lle</sup> ANNE CALAS.

Aujourd'huy trente un Janvier mil sept cent soixante sept, le Roi étant à Versailles et ayant égard à la très humble supplication que lui a fait faire le S<sup>r</sup> Jean Jacques Duvoisin, Suisse de nation, Chapelain perpétuel de l'Ambassade d'Hollande en France, de lui permettre d'épouser la D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas, Fille cadette de feu Jean Calas, Marchand à Toulouse et de D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Rose Cabibel, et Sa Majesté voulant traiter favorablement le dit S<sup>r</sup> Jean Jacques du Voisin et particulièrement la D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas en considération des temoignages avantageux qui lui ont été rendus de la probité de sa Famille, de son affection pour son service et pour sa personne, Elle leur a permis de se marier ensemble, sans que pour raison de ce, il puisse leur être imputé d'avoir contrevenu aux ordonnances de Sa Majesté, et au dit S<sup>r</sup> Jacques Duvoisin d'avoir contrevenu à celles qui deffendent aux Etrangers qui ne font pas profession de la Religion catholique apostolique et Romaine de se marier dans son Royaume ou d'épouser aucune de ses sujettes sans y être autorisés, de la rigueur desquelles Elle les a relevés et dispensés par le présent Brevet, permettant en outre par icelui à la D<sup>lle</sup> Anne Calas de jouir, faire et disposer de tous ses biens présents et à venir, et exercer tous les droits et actions en France, soit qu'elle y fixe son domicile ou qu'elle établisse sa residence en païs étranger, ayant Sa Majesté pour cette fois seulement, et sans tirer à conséquence, commandé d'expédier le dit présent Brevet, qu'Elle a pour assurance de sa volonté signé de sa main et fait contresigner par moi Conseiller Secrétaire d'état de ses commandemens et Finances.

(Signé) LOUIS

et plus bas, le Duc DE CHOISEUL.

Je soussigné, Secrétaire de Son Excellence Monsieur Leste-

venon de Berkenroode etc. Ambassadeur de Leurs Hautes Puissances les Etats Généraux des Provinces Unies, à la Cour de France, certifie que la copie ci-dessus est conforme à son original, qui lui a été adressé par son Excellence Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul. En foi de quoi j'ai signé le présent Certificat à Paris le 12 Février 1767.

(Signé) *L. Reynard.*

4. — ACTE DE MARIAGE DE J. J. DUVOISIN AVEC ANNE CALAS.

Aujourd'hui 25 de février 1767, sur le brevet donné et accordé de la part de Sa Majesté Louis XV, Roi de France et de Navarre, en date de Versailles du 31 de janvier 1767, signé par Sa Majesté même, et plus bas Le Duc de Choiseul, dispense des bans ayant à cet effet été accordée, par Son Excellence Monsieur Lestevenon, seigneur de Berkenroode, Stryen etc. etc. etc., ambassadeur de LL. HH. PP. à la Cour de France, j'ai béni en sa présence, celle de Messieurs Reynard, Serrurier, anciens de la Chapelle, de M. Loos, écuyer de Son Excellence, et de plusieurs parents et amis, dans la salle du Dais de son Hôtel, le mariage de Monsieur *Jean Jacques Duvoisin*, chapelain de la dite ambassade, fils de feu M. Benjamin Duvoisin et de défunte Madame Marguerite Duvoisin, né à Yverdun, canton de Berne, d'une part, et de mademoiselle *Anne Calas*, née à Thoulouse, fille de feu M. Jean Calas et de dame Anne Roze de Cabibel d'autre part.

Fait à Paris en Consistoire ce 25 de février 1767.

F. G. DE LA BROUE, chapelain.

*(Extrait du Registre des Mariages de la Chapelle de Hollande à Paris. — Dépôt de l'Etat Civil, Hôtel de Ville de Paris. — Reg. in-fol. Coté 97).*

5. — Un exemplaire de cette dernière pièce, que nous trouvons dans la collection de M. Fournier, porte en outre ce qui suit :

Nous Chapelains et Anciens, desservans en cette qualité la Chapelle de Leurs Hautes Puissances Nos Seigneurs les Etats Généraux des Provinces Unies des Pais-Bas, auprès de Son Excellence Monsieur Lestevenon, seigneur de Berkenroode, Stryen etc. etc. leur Ambassadeur à la Cour de France, déclarons et certifions

que l'Extrait cy dessus est conforme à son Original. En foi de quoi nous apposons l'empreinte du cachet de la Compagnie <sup>1</sup>.

Fait à Paris en Consistoire,  
ce 30 d'avril 1769

Et pour tous

F. G. DE LA BROUE, chapelain

L. REYNARD, ancien

L. SERRURIER, ancien

Suit la légalisation des signatures ci-dessus par l'ambassadeur, avec sa signature et le sceau de ses armes.

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34

(Page 293)

MARTHE CAMP, VICOMTESSE DE BOMBELLES.

J'ai publié, parmi les *Lettres inédites de Voltaire sur la tolérance*, p. 253, à propos d'une autre lettre du philosophe de Ferney, une note sur les malheurs de Marthe Camp, vicomtesse de Bombelles. Elle appartenait à une honorable famille de Montauban, et avait été mariée à un officier catholique, dans une assemblée de protestants *au Désert*. Plus tard, elle fut abandonnée avec son enfant et de fait répudiée par son mari, qui avait dissipé sa dot et qui contracta une plus riche alliance, à la faveur des lois de l'époque, d'après lesquelles les mariages protestants étaient nuls. Un vieillard opulent et très-considéré, qui jouissait, quoique protestant, de privilèges exceptionnels que sa famille tenait de Colbert, le manufacturier Van Robais vengea la délaissée en lui donnant son nom et en adoptant sa fille Charlotte de Bombelles, qui épousa plus tard un des neveux et successeurs de son père d'adoption.

1. Ce cachet du consistoire (hollandais) de Paris représente un navire en pleine mer, agité par les vents que figurent des têtes bouffies qui soufflent du milieu des nuages. Sa fière et belle devise n'a que deux mots : *Non prævalebunt*. En effet, les ennemis de l'Église protestante de Paris, depuis François I<sup>er</sup> et Charles IX, jusqu'à Louis XIV et à Saint-Florentin ont pu soulever contre elle de terribles orages, mais ils n'ont pas prévalu contre son bon droit et sa pieuse persévérance.

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## 35

(Page 293)

## ALEXANDRE DUVOISIN-CALAS.

Alexandre-Benjamin Duvoisin, qui ajouta plus tard à son nom celui de sa mère, et qui était né à Paris en 1772, était d'un caractère bizarre et inconstant. Il fut élevé à l'*Académie militaire* fondée à Colmar par le poète allemand Pfeffel, qui s'était beaucoup lié avec Voltaire, lorsque ce dernier, en 1755, avait habité les environs de Colmar. Pfeffel, ancien officier, devenu aveugle, s'est fait connaître par ses poésies et par les services qu'il sut rendre, malgré son infirmité, à l'enseignement de la jeunesse <sup>1</sup>. Il portait le plus vif intérêt aux Calas, et accueillit avec joie leur enfant dans son école.

En 1789, Alexandre fut envoyé dans la patrie adoptive de son père, à l'université d'Utrecht. Trois ans après, nous le trouvons enrôlé dans l'armée des côtes à Cherbourg. Une réquisition du Comité de salut public, obtenue sans doute par des amis, le fit attacher en 1794, comme interprète, probablement pour la langue hollandaise, à l'administration des postes. Cette place ayant été supprimée, il fut secrétaire de la légation batave à Paris.

Plus tard, nous le retrouvons au 16<sup>e</sup> régiment de dragons. Le 23 frimaire an VI, il fut arrêté à Anvers, comme suspect d'émigrer, et renvoyé sous escorte à Paris.

Au commencement de 1801, il revint d'Italie ; nous ne savons dans quelles circonstances.

En 1805, il était *secrétaire de la chambre de S. A. I. le prince Joseph*, et en janvier 1808, il avait le même titre auprès de la reine de Naples, femme de Joseph.

Le 5 nivôse an XII, « il avait épousé, dit l'historien des *Églises du Désert* <sup>2</sup>, une personne fort intéressante, M<sup>lle</sup> Castel, fille du membre de l'Assemblée législative, professeur bien connu en littérature par son poème *des Plantes*. De ce mariage naquit un fils aîné que ses parents eurent le malheur de perdre par un suicide, événement qui nous a été certifié par des témoins en position de bien connaître la vérité, » (sans doute Mme Duvoisin que dans ses

1. Th. C. Pfeffel, *Souvenirs biographiques*, recueillis par son arrière-petite-fille, Mme Lina Beck-Bernard. Lausanne, 1866.

2. *Histoire des Églises du Désert*, t. II, p. 324.

dernières années, mon oncle Charles Coquerel a bien connue). Comme Marc-Antoine, son grand-oncle, le fils aîné d'Alexandre Duvoisin se pendit, fort jeune encore, à Paris. Son frère cadet se fit marin.

Dans les intervalles des nombreuses professions qu'il adopta, Alexandre à deux reprises essaya du commerce, mais n'y réussit nullement; et nous trouvons dans la collection de ses papiers, qui appartient à M. Fournier, de grosses liasses de protêts, de jugements et autres pièces analogues qui ne montrent que trop le désastre qu'il eut à essuyer. Souvent aussi il tâcha de se créer des ressources en donnant des leçons. Enfin, il avait eu, comme son oncle Marc-Antoine, des prétentions littéraires et le goût des représentations théâtrales<sup>1</sup>. Il publia successivement plusieurs ouvrages de littérature légère qui n'eurent aucun succès et ne méritaient pas d'en avoir<sup>2</sup>.

Sa dernière œuvre fut un triste démenti donné par lui-même aux sentiments honorables qui lui avaient dicté la lettre reproduite plus haut (p. 301). Il fit une sorte de vaudeville sur la visite de sa grand'mère à Voltaire, *Un déjeuner à Ferney*; et ne sut traiter ce sujet, fort peu dramatique en lui-même, qu'en renonçant à toute apparence d'exactitude historique. La marquise de Villette (M<sup>lle</sup> de Varicourt) y joue un rôle important, quoiqu'à cette époque elle n'eût que sept ans. Le secrétaire de Voltaire Wagnière, alors âgé de vingt-cinq ans, y est traité de *vieil intendant*, et son nom même est mal écrit.

Le 31 mai 1831, cette pitoyable production fut honorée comme le porte le titre, *d'un prix d'encouragement littéraire par la division des Beaux-Arts du Ministère des travaux publics et du com-*

1. *Littérature française contemporaine*, par MM. Louandre et Bouquelot, t. III, p. 447. — *Biographie universelle, supplément*, t. LXIII, p. 285. — Quérard, *France littéraire*, t. II, p. 755.

2. *Adolphe de Valdheim (sic), ou le Parricide innocent*, par A. D. V. C. (Alexandre Duvoisin Calas). Paris, Ducauroy, an X (1802) in-12.

— *Chansonnier des casernes, ou nouveau recueil de chansons militaires*, Paris, Égron, 1822; in-8 de 8 pag.; 50 c.

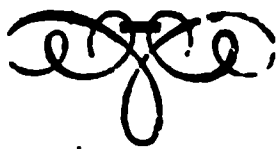
— *Firmin, ou le frère de lait, anecdote française, etc.* Paris, De-  
terville, 1803, 2 vol. in-12.

— *Wilhelmina, ou l'Héroïsme maternel, histoire hongroise*. Paris—  
G. C. Hubert, 1813, 2 vol. in-12; 5 fr.

— *Un Déjeuner à Ferney en 1765, ou la veuve Calas chez Voltaire*—  
*esquisse dramatique en un acte et en vers*. Le Mans, impr. de Monnoye—  
832, 48 p. in-8.

*merce*. Il est probable que cette récompense fut surtout un secours donné au dernier héritier de Calas. Agé alors de cinquante-huit ans, Duvoisin paraît avoir lutté péniblement contre la misère. Il eut le mauvais goût de jouer lui-même, sur un théâtre particulier, au Mans, *le Déjeuner de Ferney*, le 3 janvier 1832. Il paraît que quelques éloges de complaisance lui donnèrent un faux espoir et qu'il crut trouver une ressource dans cette étrange profanation des souvenirs de famille les plus touchants. En février, il alla à Chartres et y joua de nouveau, cette fois publiquement, le principal rôle de sa pièce; il reçut un accueil glacé, juste manifestation de la réprobation populaire. Désespéré, il se tua le 20 février 1832.

Ce suicide, dont nous avons acquis la certitude, et celui de son fils, semblent indiquer chez quelques membres de cette famille une prédisposition héréditaire, dont on connaît de nombreux exemples; ce fait donnerait même un degré de vraisemblance de plus au suicide de Marc-Antoine, qui, du reste, n'est nullement douteux.







# BIBLIOGRAPHIE<sup>1</sup>.

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## I. — AVANT LE SUPPLICE DE JEAN CALAS (9 MARS 1762).

DÉCLARATION DU SIEUR LOUIS CALAS, — à Toulouse, ce 2 décembre 1761.

« La situation accablante où je suis.... »

Signé : LOUIS CALAS.

8 p. 8°, sans nom d'imprimeur. (Designé dans les notes de ce volume, comme suit : *Louis*, 1.)

REQUÊTE ET ORDONNANCE, *qui permet la fulmination du Moniteur*, etc., — 8 déc. 1761, à TOULOUSE, de l'imprimerie de la

1. On ne regarde pas, en Allemagne, une monographie comme achevée si elle ne contient une liste précise et détaillée des écrits qui existent sur la matière, et l'on a raison. Quand on traite un sujet tout spécial, on doit prétendre, sinon à donner des résultats absolument complets et définitifs, au moins à faire connaître tout ce qui a paru sur la question, et à laisser, aux recherches des travailleurs à venir, un point de départ très-nettement marqué.

Je me suis efforcé de ne rien omettre dans le tableau qu'on va lire, et j'indique moi-même les documents que je n'ai pu me procurer ; mais je suis sûr qu'il n'en existe d'autres encore.

Comme un pareil travail ne peut être utile que par une rigoureuse exactitude, et comme dans cette liste de 141 publications, il y en a beaucoup qui se ressemblent, j'ai représenté, autant qu'il a été possible, les caractères même employés dans les titres que j'ai reproduits. — Quand le nom de l'auteur est en petit caractère et séparé du titre, c'est qu'il s'agit d'une publication anonyme. — Les diverses éditions d'un même ouvrage, autant que j'ai pu les connaître, sont inscrites sous le même numéro, sauf quelques réimpressions en pays étrangers. — J'ai

*veuve de M<sup>e</sup> BERNARD PIJON, avocat, seul Imprimeur du Roi et de la cour, chez la veuve Lecamus.*

3. **CHEFS DU MONITOIRE** Que baille, devant vous, Messieurs les Capitouls, le procureur du Roi de la ville, etc. — A TOULOUSE, de l'imprimerie de la veuve de M<sup>e</sup> BERNARD PIJON, etc.

Affiche in-f<sup>o</sup>.

4. **MÉMOIRE POUR le Sieur Jean Calas, Négociant de cette Ville; Dame Anne Rose Cabibel, son Épouse; et le Sieur Jean-Pierre Calas, un de leurs Enfants.** — A TOULOUSE, CHEZ J. RAYET, Imprimeur Libraire, à la Mère des Sciences et des Arts, Place du Palais.

« On ne sait ce qui doit.... »

*Signé : M<sup>e</sup> SUDRE, Avocat.*

104 p. 8° sans date. (Désigné ainsi dans les notes : Sudre, 1.)

5. **OBSERVATIONS POUR le Sieur Jean Calas, la Dame de Cabibel, son épouse, et le sieur Pierre Calas, leur fils. MDCCLXII.**

« On a très-bien établi.... »

*Signé : DUROUX, fils.*

72 p. 8° — Par M. de La Salle, Conseiller au Parlement de Toulouse — Voy. Court de Gebelin, *Toulousaines*, p. 141.)  
(Désigné ainsi dans les notes : La Salle.)

6. **SUITE POUR LES SIEURS ET DEMOISELLE CALAS A TOULOUSE, chez la veuve J. P. ROBERT, Imprimeur Libraire, rue S<sup>te</sup> Ursule, à S<sup>t</sup> Thomas. MDCCLXII. —**

« L'équité n'est pas.... »

*Signé : M<sup>e</sup> SUDRE, Avocat.*

56 p. 8° (Sudre, 2.)

7. **RÉFLEXIONS POUR les Sieurs et Demoiselle Calas.** — A Toulouse, chez J. P. Faye, à la place Roubaix, près l'hôtel de M. le Premier Président.

*Signé : M<sup>e</sup> SUDRE, Avocat.*

8 p. in-12. (Sudre, 3.)

8. **MÉMOIRE JUSTIFICATIF POUR LE S<sup>r</sup> LOUIS CALAS.** — A TOULOUSE,

expliqué, à mesure que l'occasion s'en présentait, les abréviations qui se trouvent dans les notes de ce volume, et qui rappellent les documents imprimés que j'ai dû citer le plus souvent. — Comme on confond souvent les nombreux factums publiés dans cette cause, j'ai indiqué les premiers mots de chacun, qui les distinguent mieux que des titres souvent trop uniformes.

de l'Imprimerie de J. Rayet, à la Mère des Sciences et des Arts, place du Palais.

« J'ose encore me flatter.... »

12 p. 8° (Louis, 2).

9. MÉMOIRE DU SIEUR GAUBERT LAVAYSSE. — A TOULOUSE, chez JEAN RAYET, Imprimeur Libraire, etc.

« J'écris pour moi.... »

26 p. 8° (Lav. 1.)

10. MÉMOIRE DE M<sup>e</sup> DAVID LAVAYSSE, Avocat en la cour, pour le Sieur François-Alexandre-Gaubert Lavaysse, son troisième fils. — A TOULOUSE, de l'Imprimerie de Jean Rayet, Imprimeur Libraire. etc.

« C'est pour mon fils.... »

Signé : LAVAYSSE fils<sup>e</sup>.

52 p. 8° (Lav. 2).

11. LA CALOMNIE CONFONDUE OU MÉMOIRE DANS lequel on réfute une nouvelle accusation intentée aux Protestants de la province du Languedoc, à l'occasion de l'affaire du S<sup>r</sup> Calas, détenu dans les prisons de Toulouse.

« S'ils ont appelé le Père de famille Beelzébuth, comment bien plus traiteront-ils de même ses domestiques. »  
« Math. X, 25. »

Au Désert. — MDCCLXII.

« Le Christianisme naissant.... »

Par Paul Rabaut et La Beaumelle. 12 p. 4° (Cal. Conf.)

12. OBSERVATIONS SUR UN MÉMOIRE QUI PARAÎT SOUS LE NOM DE PAUL RABAUT, intitulé LA CALOMNIE CONFONDUE : « Ne dum tacemus, non verecundiæ, sed diffidentiae causâ tacere videamur. S<sup>t</sup> Cip. Epist. » — MDCCLXII.

« On avait laissé dans les ténèbres.... »

Par l'abbé de Contezat. 16 p. 8°. — S. l. n. d. (Contezat.)

13. ARRÊT DE LA COUR DE PARLEMENT du 6 mars 1762, QUI Condamne un Imprimé intitulé : *La Calomnie Confondue*, etc. Signé Paul Rabaut, à être lacéré et brûlé, et ordonne l'information contre ceux qui ont composé, écrit, imprimé et

1. Étienne Lavaysse de Vidou, deuxième fils, Avocat au Parlement. Voir p. 31 de ce Mémoire.

débité ledit ouvrage. — A TOULOUSE. De l'Imprimerie de  
veuve de M<sup>e</sup> Bernard Pijon, etc.

8 p. 4°.

## II. — DU SUPPLICE DE CALAS À L'ÉDIT DU CONSEIL QUI CAS LES ARRÊTS DU PARLEMENT DE TOULOUSE (4 JUIN 1764).

### 14. PIÈCES ORIGINALES CONCERNANT LA MORT DES SIEURS CALAS LE JUGEMENT RENDU A TOULOUSE.

« Toute l'Europe retentit d'une affaire.... »

(S. l. n. d.) 22 p. 8° contenant :

#### 15. a) *Extrait d'une lettre de la Dame veuve CALAS* 15 juin 1762.

« Non, Monsieur, il n'y a rien.... »

*Avec des notes de Voltaire. (P. 1.-6.)*

#### 16. b) *LETTRÉ DE DONAT CALAS, FILS, A LA DAME VEUVE CAL-* *sa mère. — De Châtelaine, 22 juin 1762.*

« Ma chère infortunée et respectable mère.... »

*Par Voltaire. (P. 7-22.)*

#### 17. A MONSIEUR LE CHANCELIER. — *De Châtelaine, 7 ju-* *illet 1762.*

*Signé : DONAT CALAS.*

*Par Voltaire. 2 p. 8°. Lettre d'envoi des Pièces originales et  
la Requête au roi en son Conseil.*

#### 18. REQUÊTE AU ROI EN SON CONSEIL, *Châtelaine 7 juillet 1762-*

*Signé : Donat Calas.*

*Par Voltaire, 2 p. 8°.*

#### 19. PIÈCES CURIEUSES ET INTÉRESSANTES *concernant LA FAMIL-* *CALAS, qui ont été fournies PAR M. DE VOLTAIRE. — A LA* *SANNE, chez FRANÇ. GRASSET et Comp. MDCCLXVIII.*

108 p. in-18. Ce recueil contient :

##### a) *La lettre de M. de Vol.... à M. d'Am....*

*(P. 1 à 16). Voir plus bas n° 38.*

##### b) *Un AVERTISSEMENT HISTORIQUE.*

*(P. 17.)*

20. c) Lettre de Donat Calas à l'Archevêque de Toulouse, datée de Châtelaine le 8 juillet 1762.

Par Voltaire. (P. 18-27)

21. d) Lettre de M. N. N. à M. de Voltaire — à Aix, le 28 juin 1762.

(P. 29-30.) M. N. N. est un des plus grands seigneurs du Royaume (?) Cette lettre et la suivante sont contre les Calas.

22. e) Autre lettre écrite de Toulouse à Mademoiselle \*\*\*.

Signée : COUDER, Jurisconsulte.

(P. 31-37.)

23. f) MÉMOIRE DE DONAT CALAS pour son père, sa mère et son frère. — Châtelaine, 22 juillet 1762.

« Je commence par avouer.... »

Par Voltaire. (P. 38-65.)

24. g) DÉCLARATION DE PIERRE CALAS. — Châtelaine 23 Juillet 1762.

« En arrivant chez mon frère.... »

Par Voltaire. (P. 66-81.) (Décl. P. C.)

25. h) HISTOIRE D'ÉLISABETH CANNING ET DE JEAN CALAS.

« J'étais à Londres.... »

Par Voltaire. (P. 82-90 et 90-106.)

L'Ed. orig., en 21 p. 8°, est d'août 1762.

Ces huit pièces sont insérées dans un récit abrégé des faits. La plupart des publications de Voltaire sur cette affaire ont été aussi imprimées dans le format in-8° et réunies sous le titre de : RECUEIL DE DIFFÉRENTES PIÈCES SUR L'AFFAIRE MALHEUREUSE DE LA FAMILLE DES CALAS. On trouve souvent, chez les marchands de vieux livres et dans les bibliothèques, ce recueil relié avec quelques-uns des *Mémoires* suivants.

26. MÉMOIRE A CONSULTER ET CONSULTATION POUR la Dame Anne Rose Cabibel veuve CALAS et ses enfants. — Paris 23 Août 1762. — De l'Imprimerie LE BRETON Imprimeur ordinaire du Roi 1762.

« La plus infortunée.... »

Signé : ÉLIE DE BEAUMONT (et 15 autres Avocats.)

(Précédé d'un Avis de l'Imprimeur, 2 p. 8°)

70 p. 8°. (E. de B. 1.)

27. MÉMOIRE POUR Dame ANNE ROSE CABIBEL, veuve du Sieur JEAN CALAS, Marchand à Toulouse; LOUIS et LOUIS DONAT CALAS leurs fils, et ANNE ROSE et ANNE CALAS leurs filles,

Demandeurs en cassation d'un arrêt du Parlement de Toulouse du 9 mars 1762.

De l'Imprimerie de LE BRETON, etc. 1762.

« Jamais spectacle.... »

Signé : M<sup>e</sup> MARIETTE, Avocat.

136 p. 8°. (Mar. 1.)

28. MÉMOIRE POUR DONAT, PIERRE ET LOUIS CALAS. — De l'Imprimerie de LE BRETON, etc.

« Un fils, accablé.... »

Signé : M<sup>e</sup> LOYSEAU DE MAULÉON, Avocat.

63 p. 8° ou 65 p. 4° (L. de M.)

Par un artifice un peu puéril, on nomme ici les trois frères dans l'ordre inverse de leurs âges. Louis inspirait si peu de sympathie, qu'on a voulu le désigner le dernier. Voltaire avait rendu fort intéressant le petit Donat dont la simplicité et le cœur l'avaient touché.

Ce Mémoire se trouve aussi parmi les *Plaidoyers* de Loyseau de Mauléon. Paris, 1771 (t. 1<sup>er</sup>), qui ont été traduits en allemand, Zurich, 1772.

29. RÉFLEXIONS POUR Dame ANNE ROSE CABIBEL, veuve du S<sup>r</sup> JEAN CALAS, Marchand à Toulouse, LOUIS et LOUIS-DONAT CALAS, leurs fils; et ANNE et ANNE ROSE CALAS, leurs filles, Demandeurs en cassation d'un Arrêt du Parlement de Toulouse du 9 Mars 1762.

De l'Imprimerie de LE BRETON, etc. 1763.

« Il n'est personne.... »

Signé : M<sup>e</sup> MARIETTE, Avocat.

10 p. 8°. (Mar. 2)

30. EXTRAIT d'une lettre écrite en réponse à un chirurgien de Lyon, par le Sieur Lamarque, chirurgien de Toulouse, au sujet de la Digestion.

Signé : LAMARQUE.

4 p. 4° S. l. n. d.

31. MÉMOIRE SUR UNE QUESTION ANATOMIQUE RELATIVE A LA JURISPRUDENCE, Dans lequel on établit les principes pour distinguer, à l'inspection d'un corps trouvé pendu, les signes du SUICIDE d'avec ceux de l'ASSASSINAT. Par M. LOUIS, Professeur Royal de chirurgie, Censeur Royal, chirurgien consultant des armées du Roi, A PARIS, chez P. G. Cavelier, 1763.

54 p. 8°.

Lu à la séance publique de l'Académie royale de chirurgie le

jeudi 14 avril 1763. — Suivi de l'approbation de M. Pibrac, directeur de l'Académie royale de chirurgie.

Permis d'imprimer 29 avril 1763 *Signé* De SARTINE.

32. LETTRE écrite à un des principaux Magistrats du Conseil d'État, le 24 Déc. 1762 par la sœur ANNE JULIE FRAISSE, Religieuse de la Visitation de Ste Marie de Toulouse.

2 p. 8° S. l. n. d. — C'est la première des quarante lettres que nous avons données plus haut.

33. OBSERVATIONS pour la Dame veuve CALAS et sa famille. — De l'Imprimerie de LE BRETON, etc. 1764.

« La longueur inévitable.... »

*Signé* : M<sup>e</sup> MARIETTE, Avocat.

29 p. 8° (Mar. 3).

34. LES TOULOUSAINES OU LETTRES HISTORIQUES ET APOLOGÉTIQUES, En faveur de la Religion Réformée, et de divers Protestants condamnés dans ces derniers temps par le Parlement de Toulouse, ou dans le Haut - Languedoc. — A ÉDIMBOURG (Lausanne).

*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?* Virg. *Æneid.*

Par Court de Gébelin. 1 v. in-12. 1763.

Cet ouvrage a paru en feuilles. Il y a deux tirages; l'un est de 444 p.; l'autre, de 458, contient quelques courtes additions. La dernière lettre est datée du 10 décembre 1762; mais Voltaire fit prier Court de Gébelin de retarder la mise en vente, de peur de nuire aux Calas.

### III. — DE L'ARRÊT DU CONSEIL A LA FIN DU DIX-HUITIÈME SIÈCLE.

35. MÉMOIRE POUR la veuve CALAS et sa famille. — De l'Imprimerie De Grangé, rue de la Parcheminerie 1765.

« Enfin, après le plus sérieux examen.... »

*Signé* : M<sup>e</sup> MARIETTE, Avocat.

53 p. 8° (Mar. 4).

36. MÉMOIRE A CONSULTER ET CONSULTATION POUR LES ENFANTS DE DÉFUNT JEAN CALAS, MARCHAND A TOULOUSE. — A Paris, chez Merlin, Libraire, à l'entrée de la rue de la Harpe, en venant par la rue de la Bouclerie MDCCLXV.

« Toute l'Europe est instruite du sort déplorable.... »

*Signé* : ÉLIE DE BEAUMONT.

8°, 28 p.; in-12°, 31 p. L'éd. 8° est signée de lui et de sept autres avocats, le 22 janvier 1765. (E de B. 2.)



M<sup>me</sup> Calas, dans une note de sa main, où elle énumère les mémoires publiés en sa faveur, attribue celui-ci à Mariette qui est un des neuf signataires.

37. MÉMOIRE DU SIEUR FRANÇOIS ALEXANDRE GUALBERT LAVAYSSE. — Paris, de l'imprimerie de Louis Collot, rue Dauphine MDCCLXV.

« L'affaire des Calas.... »

32 p. 8°. Autres Éd : 26 p. 4°. 31 p. 12°. (Lav. 3.)

38. LETTRE DE M. DE VOL.... A M. D'AM....

Au château de Ferney, 1<sup>er</sup> Mars 1765.

« J'ai dévoré.... »

(Voltaire à Damilaville).

16 p. in-18. (S. l. n. d. d'impression.)

39. LETTRE D'UN PHILOSOPHE PROTESTANT à M. X.\*\*\* *sur une lettre que M. de Voltaire a écrite à M. d'Am.... à Paris, au sujet des Calas.*

Par Fréron.

(ANNÉE LITTÉRAIRE, Mai 1765, t. III, p. 145.)

40. MÉMOIRE POUR Dame ANNE ROSE CABIBEL VEUVE CALAS ET POUR SES ENFANTS, sur le Renvoi aux Requêtes de l'Hôtel au Souverain, ordonné par arrêt du Conseil du 4 juin 1764. — De l'imprimerie de Louis Collot, rue Dauphine. MDCCLXV.

« Il n'existe donc plus, ce jugement.... »

Signé : ÉLIE DE BEAUMONT, Avocat.

94 p. 12°. — 94 p. 8° (E. de B. 3.)

La dernière page contient le RAPPORT du médecin et des chirurgiens, qui examinèrent le corps de Marc-Antoine Calas, daté du 14 novembre 1761.

41. JUGEMENT SOUVERAIN DES REQUÊTES ORDINAIRES DE L'HÔTEL DU ROI, *Qui décharge Anne Rose Cabibel, Veuve de Jean Calas, Marchand à Toulouse; Jean-Pierre-Calas, son fils; Jeanne Viguière, Fille de service chez ledit Calas, Alexandre-François-Gualbert Lavaysse, ET LA MÉMOIRE dudit défunt Jean Calas, de l'accusation contre eux intentée.* — Du 9 Mars 1765. A PARIS, DE L'IMPRIMERIE ROYALE. 1765.

(Éditions diverses en 14 p. 4°, — 39 p. 8°, — 35 in-12°.)

42. TRAITÉ SUR LA TOLÉRANCE, A L'OCCASION DE LA MORT DE JEAN CALAS.

1763. — Sans indication de lieu. 183 p. 8°.

Par Voltaire. Écrit en 1762 et achevé en 1763 (voir une note du ch. XVII), répandu à petit nombre jusqu'après le jugement. En 1765, Voltaire fit réimprimer ce *Traité* avec un ARTICLE NOUVELLEMENT AJOUTÉ, dans lequel on rend compte du dernier arrêt rendu en faveur de la famille des Calas.

43. PROJET DE SOUSCRIPTION POUR UNE ESTAMPE TRAGIQUE ET MORALE.

*Qualibus in tenebris vitæ quantisque periclis,  
Degitur hoc ævi quodcumque est.*

(10 ou 12 p. 8°.) Permis d'imprimer, ce 18 juillet 1765.

44. LETTRE DE M. LE MARQUIS D'ARGENCE, BRIGADIER DES ARMÉES DU ROI.

Au château de Dirac, ce 20 juillet 1765.

(Réponse à la *Lettre d'un philosophe protestant* par Fréron indiquée plus haut n° 39.)

45. LETTRE A M. LE MARQUIS D'ARGENCE DE DIRAC.

24 Auguste 1765.

Par Voltaire. Ces deux lettres, en 8 p. in-12. S. l. n. d.

46. AVIS AU PUBLIC SUR LES PARRICIDES IMPUTÉS AUX CALAS ET AUX SIRVEN.

Par Voltaire. 34 p. 8° S. l. n. d.

47. LETTRE DE M. DE VOLTAIRE A M. ÉLIE DE BEAUMONT, AVOCAT AU PARLEMENT. DU 20 MARS 1767.

« Votre mémoire.... »

2<sup>e</sup> édition. 15 p. 8°. Le sujet de cette lettre est le procès de Sirven, mais elle contient sur les Calas des détails inédits.

48. DÉCLARATION DE JEANNE VIGUIÈRE, *Ancienne Domestique des Sieur et Dame CALAS de Toulouse, touchant les bruits calomnieux qui sont répandus sur son compte. Permis d'imprimer, ce 9 Avril 1767. DE SARTINE. — De l'Imprimerie de P. DE LORMEL, rue du Foin.*

8 p. in-8°. — On lit à la fin de cette pièce :

« N. B. Cette calomnie avait été publiée dans tout le Languedoc, et elle était répandue dans Paris par le nommé Fréron, pour empêcher M. de Voltaire de poursuivre la justification des Sirven accusés du même crime que les Calas. Tous ceux qui auront lu cette feuille authentique sont priés de la conserver comme un monument de la rage absurde du fanatisme. »

49. *Histoire de la délivrance de la ville de Toulouse, arrivée le 17 Mai 1562, où l'on voit la conspiration des huguenots contre*

*les catholiques, leurs différents combats, la défaite des huguenots et l'origine de la procession du 17 Mai, le dénombrement des reliques de l'Église de Cernin (St Sernin) : le tout tiré des annales de ladite ville.*

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum !*

1762. — Toulouse, chez Michel Sens, libraire, rue Saint-Rome.

« L'historien, dans une préface très-judicieuse et bien écrite, « fait voir la nécessité de supprimer cette cérémonie, monument « trop durable du fanatisme et de la révolte. » *Mémoires secrets* (Bachaumont) T. 2, p. 190, 5 mai 1765.

50. HISTOIRE DES MALHEURS DE LA FAMILLE DE CALAS, etc., précédée de : *Marc Antoine Calas le suicidé à l'Univers*, Héroïde.

Par Édouard-Thomas Simon — 1766. 8°.

Voir : Ersch. *France Littér.* I, 406 et II, 302, et Salvan (plus bas, n° 89).

51. SENTIMENT POLITIQUE, etc.

Cinq lettres contre les Calas citées dans Bachaumont (*Mémoires secrets*, au 29 oct. 1767, t. II, p. 186 (Éd. 1830).

Peut-être est-ce l'écrit *imprimé à Toulouse* que Voltaire, voulant le montrer au rapporteur de l'affaire Sirven, à Chardon, demanda à Moulou par lettre du 2 Déc. 1767 (Notre recueil) et le surlendemain au pasteur Olivier Desmons.

52. SERMONS PRÊCHÉS A TOULOUSE *Devant Messieurs du Parlement et du Capitoulat* Par le Révérend Père APOMPÉE DE TRAGOPONE, Capucin de la Champagne Pouilleuse. — A ÉLEUTHEROPOLIS chez JONAS FREETHINKER, Imprimeur et Libraire, Rue de l'Antimoine, entre le Palais de la Raison et l'Église de Notre-Dame des Lumières. 1772.

440 p. in-12. — Ce volume contient :

a) PREMIER SERMON Sur la mort de *Jean Calas* Vieillard infirme accusé par les bons Catholiques d'avoir pendu le 13 Octobre 1761 son fils aîné, jeune homme le plus adroit, le plus fort et le plus robuste de la Province ; pour ce fait, condamné à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire par arrêt des Capitouls, lequel fut cassé et ensuite confirmé et aggravé par arrêt du Parlement de Toulouse. Enfin ledit *Jean Calas* condamné à être rompu vif, par arrêt de la même Cour du 9<sup>m</sup> Mars 1762. — Avec des notes historiques et critiques de l'Éditeur.

NIHIL ORITURUM ALIAS, NIL ORTUM TALE FATENTES.

(P. 1 — 226.)

b) **SECOND SERMON** *Prêché par le même, devant la même assemblée et à la même occasion.*

(P. 227 — 378.)

c) **COURTES RÉFLEXIONS SUR LES DEUX SERMONS PRÉCÉDENTS.**

(P. 379 — 404.)

d) **LETTRES.** — *Les Lettres suivantes ont été écrites par un jeune homme nommé Pagez, Étudiant en droit à Toulouse, Parent de la famille Calas. Elles sont adressées à Louis Calas, le cadet des frères, lequel ayant changé de Religion était alors à la Dalbade, fameux couvent des PP. de l'Oratoire, près de Toulouse.*

(P. 405 — 440.)

Ce livre est un violent pamphlet de l'école de Voltaire. Les lettres, au nombre de 10 (avec les réponses) ne sont pas plus authentiques que les sermons. L'auteur, qui attaque le christianisme avec des quolibets, souvent indécents, et une érudition de dernier ordre, combat pour les Calas avec des assertions inexactes et des points d'exclamation.

**53. Lettres inédites de Voltaire**<sup>1</sup> recueillies par M. de Cayrol, publiées par M. A. François.

2 vol. in-8° 1856. — Paris, 2<sup>e</sup> Éd. 1860.

**54. Voltaire à Ferney**, par Évariste Bavoux et A. F.

1 vol. 8° 1858. Paris.

(Contenant, entre autres, sa correspondance avec la duchesse de Saxe-Gotha).

**55. Le dernier volume des Œuvres de Voltaire** par E. Didier.

1 vol. 8° 1862. Paris.

Les trois lettres à de Végobre que contient ce volume concernent la famille Calas et non les Sirven, comme le dit l'éditeur.

**56. Lettres inédites de Voltaire sur la tolérance**, publiées avec une introduction et des notes par Ath. Coquerel fils.

1 vol. in-12. 1863. Paris.

(Calas, — Sirven, — les Galériens protestants, — Marthe Camp, — le passe-port du ministre Moulton, — Rippert de Montclar). Désigné dans ce volume par les mots : *notre Recueil*.

1. Nous n'indiquerons ici aucune édition des Œuvres de Voltaire, nous nous bornerons à ceux des recueils de ses lettres publiés de nos jours qui ont ajouté de nouvelles pièces au vaste dossier épistolaire de l'affaire Calas.

57. CONVENTION NATIONALE. — RAPPORT ET PROJET DE DÉCRET *Sur la proposition d'indemniser les enfants de JEAN CALAS, de la ruine que son procès leur a occasionnée, aux dépens de qui il appartiendra*; PRÉSENTÉS AU NOM DU COMITÉ DE LÉGISLATION PAR F. S. BEZARD, *Député par le département de l'Oise à la Convention Nationale*. — Séance du 23 pluviôse an 2 (11 février 1794). IMPRIMÉS PAR ORDRE DE LA CONVENTION NATIONALE.

De l'Imprimerie Nationale.

12 p. 8°.

#### IV. — PIÈCES DE VERS.

58. *JEAN CALAS A SA FEMME ET A SES ENFANTS*, héroïde, par Blin de Sainmore, 1765. — Paris, de l'Imprimerie de SÉBASTIEN JORRY, rue et vis à vis la Comédie-Française, au Grand Monarque.

*Tantum Relligio potuit suadere malorum*. Lucret. l. 1.

24 p. 8°. Cette *Héroïde*, qui a eu 4 éditions, a paru avec d'autres écrits du même auteur 1766-1768, 8°.

59. *CALAS SUR L'ÉCHAFAUD A SES JUGES*. 1 1765. — Veuve Pierre.

Bayonne et Paris.

8 p. 8°. Autre Éd. in-12.

60. *L'OMBRE DE CALAS, LE SUICIDE A SA FAMILLE ET A SON AMI DANS LES FERS*, — *précédée d'une lettre à M. de Voltaire*.

A Amsterdam et se vend à Paris chez Cailleau, Libraire, rue du Foin-S<sup>t</sup>-Jacques à S<sup>t</sup> André. MDCCLXV.

16 p. 8°. par Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Nougaret, né à la Rochelle le 16 décembre 1742, mort en 1823. Voltaire lui écrivit le 20 avril 1765, en réponse à l'envoi de ces vers.

61. *LETTRE D'UN COSMOPOLITE A L'OMBRE DE CALAS (sio)*. 1765.

Par Bernard-Louis Verlac de la Bastide, Avocat à Nismes.  
8 p. 8°.

1. Bachaumont (Mém. Secrets, t. I, p. 164), parle d'une héroïde où Barthe chante Calas, mais qui n'est pas encore publiée (12 janvier 1763); serait-ce *Calas sur l'échafaud*?

Ce titre est inexact ; les 2 premières pages sont une *Lettre d'un Cosmopolite à M. de Saint E\*\*\**, 1<sup>er</sup> may 1763. Les 4 dernières pages contiennent une *Épître à l'ombre de Calas*. Voltaire remercia l'auteur de l'envoi de ces vers, le 17 mai 1765.

62. REQUÊTE AU ROI, POUR LA DAME VEUVE CALAS. — 1763 et 1764.

8 p. 4<sup>e</sup> et 8<sup>e</sup> (s. l. n. d.) En vers (par M. Le Roy).

63. ÉPÎTRE A M. DE VOLTAIRE, sur la réhabilitation de la Famille Calas, par la Harpe. — 1765.

En vers libres (Dans ses *Œuvres*).

64. *Marc-Antoine Calas le suicide à l'Univers*, héraïde par E. T. Simon, voir plus haut, n° 50.

#### V. — THÉÂTRE<sup>1</sup>.

5. CALAS OU LE FANATISME, Drame en quatre actes, en prose, par M. LEMIERRE D'ARGY, représenté pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le Théâtre du Palais - Royal, le 17 Décembre 1790. — *Quot victimæ in una!* (OVID.) — A Paris, au bureau des *Révolutions de Paris*, rue des Marais F. S. G. n° 20 — 1791.

120 p. in-8.

(Précédée d'une Histoire abrégée de la mort de Jean Calas, tirée des *Œuvres* de Voltaire.)

Lemierre d'Argy était neveu de l'Académicien.

6. JEAN CALAS, tragédie en cinq actes, en vers, représentée pour la 1<sup>re</sup> fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de la Nation, par MM. les Comédiens Français, le 18 Décembre 1790. — Précédée d'une préface historique sur Jean Calas et suivie d'un nouveau V<sup>e</sup> Acte. Par J. L. LAYA. — A Paris, chez Maradan et Perlet, rue St-André-des-Arts, hôtel de Château-Vieux, 1791.

116 p. 8<sup>e</sup>.

67. LA BIENFAISANCE DE VOLTAIRE, pièce dramatique en un acte, en vers, par M. VILLEMALIN D'ABANCOURT. Représentée pour la première fois sur le Théâtre de la Nation, le lundi 30 Mai 1791.

*Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.* Lucrèce.

1. Pour les pièces de théâtre en langues étrangères, voir plus loin, 109, 121, 122.

(Dédiée aux mânes de Voltaire; dédicace en vers.)

A Paris, chez Brunet, libr. rue de Marivaux, près le Théâtre Italien. 1791.

46 p. 8°.

68. JEAN CALAS, tragédie en cinq actes (en vers), par Marie-Joseph CHÉNIER, Député à la Convention Nationale, Représentée pour la 1<sup>re</sup> fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de la République, le 6 Juillet 1791. (Précédée d'une lettre de M. Palissot sur la tragédie des Calas.)

A Paris, chez Moutard, Libraire Imprimeur, rue des Mathurins, section de Beaurepaire, n° 334. — 1793.

91 p. 8°. (Intitulée aussi : Jean Calas ou l'École des Juges.)

69. LA VEUVE CALAS A PARIS, ou le triomphe de Voltaire, pièce en un acte, en prose, par M. J.-B. PUJOLX, représentée sur le Théâtre Italien le 31 Juillet 1791.

*J'ai fait un peu de bien; c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.*

VOLTAIRE.

A Paris, chez Brunet, libraire, place du Théâtre Italien.

32 p. 8° — Voltaire est au nombre des personnages, quoiqu'il ne soit venu à Paris que seize ans après l'époque indiquée. On assure que cette pièce a été mise en musique et chantée au Théâtre Favart.

70. CALAS, Drame en trois actes et en prose, par Victor DUCANGE, représenté pour la 1<sup>re</sup> fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique, le 28 Novembre 1819 et repris à la Gaité en 1841.

30 p. 8°.

71. UN DÉJEUNER A FERNEY EN 1765, ou la Veuve Calas chez Voltaire, esquisse dramatique en un acte et en vers, par Alexandre DUVOISIN-CALAS.

Le Mans. Imprimerie de Monnoyer. 1832.

48 p. 8°.

72. LA MORT DE CALAS, tragédie bourgeoise traduite du hollandais en français, par le Chevalier d'Estimenville de B. — A Leyde chez C. van Hoogeveen. 1780.

La Dédicace à Madame veuve Calas, à ses enfants et à l'ami qui partagea leurs fers, est datée de la Haye, le 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1780.

C'est une traduction libre et en prose de la tragédie *De Dood van Calas*. Voir plus loin n° 121.

73. **LES CALAS**, drame en trois actes et en prose, par M. de Brumore, 1778. 8°. Berlin.

74. **LES SALVER, ou la Faute réparée**, drame en 3 actes et en prose, par M. de Brumore, 1778. 8°. Berlin.

M. Beuchot (Éd. de Voltaire, t. 4, p. 502) indique cette pièce comme se rapportant, ainsi que la précédente, à l'histoire des Calas. Je dois à M. Barbier la communication d'une note manuscrite de M. Beuchot, qui confirme ce renseignement; M. Beuchot avait vu les deux pièces de Brumore dans la fameuse Bibliothèque théâtrale de M. de Soleinne.

## VI. — DIX-NEUVIÈME SIÈCLE.

75. **JEAN CALAS OU L'INNOCENT CONDAMNÉ, SUIVI *Du récit de la condamnation injuste de plusieurs Victimes du fanatisme, de l'intolérance, de la superstition ou de l'erreur***, PAR A. S.

Quand le juste opprimé périt sans défenseur,  
La honte doit tomber sur le juge oppresseur.

(CHÉNIER, *tragédie de Calas.*)

A Paris, chez Figer, Imprimeur Libraire, rue du Petit Pont, n° 10.

108 p. in-18°. S. d.

(Avec un frontispice. Voir n° 137.)

76. **HISTOIRE DE LA VILLE DE TOULOUSE, depuis la conquête des Romains jusqu'à nos jours**, par J. B. S. D'ALDÉGUIER. — Toulouse, 1835.

4 vol. 8°. Voir T. IV, pages 297 à 315 et les notes p. 18 à 31.

Ce même récit a paru dans la *Mosaïque du Midi*. 4<sup>e</sup> année, p. 151 et suiv.

77. **HISTOIRE DES ÉGLISES DU DÉSERT**, par Charles COQUEREL, — Paris, 1841.

2 vol. 8° (t. 2, p. 304-341.)

78. **HISTOIRE DES PASTEURS DU DÉSERT**, par Napoléon PEYRAT. — Paris, 1842.

2 vol. 8°.

79. **HISTOIRE POLITIQUE, RELIGIEUSE ET LITTÉRAIRE DU MIDI DE LA FRANCE depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours**, par MARY LAFON. — 1841.

4 Vol. 8°. (T. IV, p. 325-356.)



80. HISTOIRE GÉNÉRALE DE LANGUEDOC par Dom Claude de Vic et Dom Vaissette, Religieux Bénédictins de la Congrégation de St Maur, commentée et continuée jusqu'en 1830, par le chevalier Al. DU MÉGE. — Toulouse, 1846.

10 vol. 8°. (T. 10, p. 565-580.)

81. LE PROCÈS CALAS, *Compte-rendu de la Procédure conservée aux archives de l'ancien parlement de Toulouse*, lu le 7 Décembre 1854, à la rentrée solennelle des conférences des avocats stagiaires, par M<sup>e</sup> Théophile Huc, avocat près la Cour impériale de Toulouse, Docteur en Droit. — Paris, Libr. Ch. Douniol, rue de Tournon, 29.

32 p. 8°. — Extrait du *Correspondant*, t. 35, 5<sup>e</sup> livraison, 25 février 1855; reproduit aussi dans le journal *l'Univers*.

82. PROCÈS-VERBAL INÉDIT de la question et de l'exécution de Jean Calas père.

Publié dans les *Petites Causes célèbres du jour*, par Frédéric Thomas, avocat à la Cour impériale. Paris, 1855. Septième volume, p. 287.

83. VOLTAIRE ET LES GENEVOIS, par J. GABEREL, ancien pasteur. — Genève, 1856. (Deuxième édition 1857.)

1 vol. 12°.

84. GUIDE DANS TOULOUSE, par LE BLANC DU VERNET (1857).

1 vol. 12°.

85. LES PARLEMENTS DE FRANCE, Essai historique sur leurs usages, leur organisation et leur autorité par le Vicomte de BASTARD D'ESTANG, etc., conseiller à la cour impériale de Paris. — Paris 1857.

2 vol. 8°. (Voir le t. I, p. 383-414.)

86. CAUSES CÉLÈBRES DE TOUS LES PEUPLES, par A. Fouquier <sup>1</sup> — Cahier 8, ou 36<sup>e</sup> Livraison.

Calas, Sirven, De la Barre. — 32 p. in-folio, dont 30 consacrées à Calas. — Illustré de 7 gravures sur bois, dont une reproduit l'estampe d'après Carmontelle et une autre représente la scène apocryphe de Jean Calas sur la charrette du bourreau bénissant sa maison.

87. LA FAMILLE CALAS ou les Victimes du Fanatisme (Roman) par CLÉMENCE ROBERT.

Dans le *Journal à cinq centimes*.

23 févr. à 18 mai 1861.

1. Nous indiquons seulement pour mémoire d'autres recueils de *Causes célèbres* : *La Ville* 1770, t. 1<sup>er</sup> (ou in-12, t. iv), et *St Edme* t. 1<sup>er</sup>, p. 451.

3. LA FAMILLE CALAS par la même (première partie du même ouvrage) 1863 Arnauld de Vresse.

1 vol. 12°.

4. HISTOIRE DE JEAN CALAS A TOULOUSE d'après la procédure authentique et la Correspondance administrative, par l'abbé SALVAN, chanoine honoraire de Toulouse.

(Réponse au présent ouvrage). Toulouse, 1863. 1 v. 12°.

5. LES CLIENTS DE VOLTAIRE, discours à la conférence des avocats le 28 Décembre 1868 par M<sup>e</sup> Raoul Calary (*Le Droit*, 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1869).

## VII. — ANGLETERRE<sup>1</sup>.

1. ORIGINAL PIECES *relative to the Trial and execution of M. CALAS, merchant in Toulouse.* — Londres, 1762.

8° (Becket.)

2. HISTOIRE D'ÉLIZABETH CANNING ET DE JEAN CALAS. — MÉMOIRE DE DONAT CALAS, pour son Père, sa Mère et son frère — Déclaration de PIERRE CALAS. Avec les pièces originales concernant la mort des S<sup>r</sup> Calas, et le jugement rendu à Toulouse. Par M. de VOLTAIRE. — A Londres, chez JEAN NOURSE, libraire, dans le *Strand*. 1762.

59 p. 8°.

3. A TREATISE ON TOLERATION, *occasioned by the death of J. CALAS.* — London 1763.

Trad. de Voltaire.

4. A CRITICAL EXAMINATION *of the evidence for and against the prisoners P. CALAS, his mother, etc.* — London, 1764.

8° (Whitridge.)

5. LETTRE DE M. DE VOL.... A M. D'AM.... *sur deux événements tragiques en FRANCE du même temps ; dans la persécution des*

1. Voltaire faisait écrire à Mme Calas par Wagnière le 14 sept. 1762 (voir Notre Recueil) : « Les mémoires préparatoires qu'on a imprimés ont été traduits actuellement en allemand, en anglais et en hollandais ; le public a prononcé en faveur de l'innocence ; le conseil la vengera. » Il est probable qu'une partie de ces traductions ont échappé à nos recherches.

*deux familles de CALAS et de SIRVEN pour cause de RELIGION.*  
Genève (Londres). — 1765.

16 p. 18°.

96. AN ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC upon the parricides imputed to the families of Calas and Sirven. — 1767.

Trad. de Voltaire.

97. THE HISTORY OF THE MISFORTUNES OF JOHN CALAS, A VICTIM TO FANATICISM, to which is added a letter from M. Calas to his Wife and children. — Written by Monsieur DE VOLTAIRE.

Printed by T. Sherlock near Southampton Street, Strand 1772  
(Tout en anglais, sauf la Lettre en vers de Blin de Sainmore, 8 pages. Voir plus haut, n° 58.) En tête se trouve, en IV pages : *List of the nobility and gentry who have subscribed to relieve the family of Calas.* Cette liste, ouverte par les noms de la Reine et de l'Archevêque de Cantorbéry, porte ceux de 10 Évêques, de 79 Lords et de 47 Gentlemen.

IV, 33 et 8 p. 8°.

Autre édition : même titre.

London, printed by J. Cooper, Bow Street, Covent Garden, for Louis Calas. 1789. 55 p. 8°.

Après 27 pages de récit en anglais, on lit en français : *Histoire des malheurs de la famille de Calas, suivie d'une lettre de Jean Calas à sa femme et à ses enfants.* L'Histoire n'occupe que 4 pages. L'héroïde de Blin de Sainmore (qui n'est pas nommée) se trouve à la suite, et la pièce de vers intitulée *Calas sur l'échafaud à ses juges* termine le volume.

98. *Gentleman's Magazine*, t. xxxii, p. 509 (long récit de l'affaire Calas), t. xxxiv, p. 54, t. xxxv, p. 143, t. xliv, p. 118, t. lvii, p. 337, t. xlv, p. 722.

99. *London and St James Chronicle.*

A SUBSCRIPTION is Humbly requested for the Unhappy FAMILY of CALAS.

O England! can you hear a good man groan and not relent or not compassion him? (sic)

SHAKESPEARE.

On ajoute que les dons sont reçus par M. Dubisson (sic) at his house in Mortimer street, Cavendish square, chez T. Beck et P. A. de Hondt, libraires. Les dons et les noms des donateurs seront publiés dans les journaux.

(Nous avons publié cette pièce, très-probablement émanée de Louis Calas, dans l'appendice de notre recueil de *Lettres inédites* de Voltaire, p. 303.)

VIII. — ALLEMAGNE<sup>1</sup>.

00. *Literarischer Anzeiger*, Göttingen 1763.

01. *Nova Acta Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ*.

Weimar, 1764. — T. IV (ou n° 30), p. 183-207 et p. 748-794.

02. *LEBEN UND TOD des zu Toulouse unschuldig gerichteten JOHANN CALAS, nebst dem über ihn gesprochenen Urtheil, aus dem françoisischen.* — Francfurt und Leipzig. 1767.

16 p. 4°.

(Il est probable, d'après la préface, que cette publication a été continuée.)

03. — La lettre de M<sup>m</sup> Calas et celle de Voltaire sous le nom de Donat ont paru en allemand à Berlin en 1763.

04. HENKE. — *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*.

T. VI, p. 288.

05. HENKE. — *Kirchengeschichte des 18<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhunderts*.

T. 2.

06. VON EINEM. — *Versuch einer Vollständigen Kirchengeschichte des 18<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhunderts.* — Leipzig, 1778.

T. 2.

07. ERSCH UND GRUBER. — *Allgemeine Encyclopædie.* — Leipzig. 1825.

4° Sect. I, t. XIV, p. 104. — Article de Baur.

08. — HERZOG. — *Real-Encyclopædie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche.* — Stuttgart und Hamburg.

22 vol. gr. 8° 1854-1868 (t. 2, p. 495-498. Art. de M. G. von Polenz).

09. C. F. WEISZE. *Der Fanatismus oder Jean Calas, ein Trauerspiel.* (Drame historique en 5 actes.) — Leipz. 1780.

*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*

Et dans le recueil de ses tragédies, Carlsruhe. 1782. T. 3, p. 99.

10. *Geschichte der neuesten Weltbegebenheiten.*

T. I<sup>er</sup>.

1. Cette liste allemande est sans doute fort incomplète. Nous y avons ajouté quelques journaux et recueils qui indiquent au moins que l'on est intéressé aux Calas au delà du Rhin.

111. *Litteratur und Theater Zeitung*. 1780. L. 26 und 28.

112. *Biographien hingerichteter Personen*.

T. 3, p. 326-348.

Cette notice est une traduction des documents publiés en France.

113. Lic. th. W. MANGOLD, a. prof. der Theol. zu Marburg. — *Jean Calas und Voltaire*.

Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kampfes um die Toleranz, Kassel, 1861, 50 p. in-8°.

114. Dr HERZOG. *Die Familie Calas und Voltaire der Retter ihrer Ehre*.

Dans le Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie; zweites Heft., Gotha, 1868, p. 218-264.

#### IX. — HOLLANDE.

115. PIÈCES ORIGINALES *Concernant la mort des Srs CALAS et le jugement rendu à Toulouse*. — A Amsterdam, chez Magerus et Harrevett; à Haarlem, chez J. Bosch; à Leyden, chez les Frères Luchtmans; à Rotterdam, chez J. D. Beman; à la Haye chez Pierre Gosse Junior et Daniel Pinet. 1762.

29 p. in-12.

Il existe une autre édition d'Amsterdam contenant la lettre de M<sup>me</sup> Calas, et celle de Donat à sa mère. 1763, Schneider.

116. INNOCENCE ET SUPPLICE DE JEAN CALAS, *négociant à Toulouse*.

24 p. in-12. Réimpression hollandaise de l'histoire d'Elizabeth Canning et de Jean Calas.

117. MÉMOIRE DE DONAT CALAS, pour son père, sa mère et son frère.

118. DÉCLARATION DE PIERRE CALAS.

Réuni au précédent en 40 p. in-12°.

119. MÉMOIRE POUR DONAT, PIERRE ET LOUIS CALAS, *au sujet du jugement rendu à Toulouse, contre le Sieur JEAN CALAS leur Père, Par Monsieur LOYSEAU DE MAULÉON, Avocat au Parlement de Paris*.

*Imprimé sur la copie de Paris*.

A LA HAYE chez DANIEL AILLAUD, Libraire. 1763.

88 p. in-12.



X. — ESTAMPES <sup>1</sup>.

127. a) LA MALHEUREUSE FAMILLE CALAS. La Mère, les deux Filles, avec Jeanne Viguière, leur bonne servante, le Fils et son ami le jeune Lavaysse.

Qualibus in tenebris vitæ quantisque periclis  
Degitur hoc ævi quodcumque est. *Lucret.*

*Avec privilège du Roi.*

*L. C. De Carmontelle delineavit 1765. — DELAFOSSE sculpsit.*

In-folio en largeur. (Reproduite en tête de ce volume.)

On a de cette planche deux états différents; dans l'un le mot *sculpsit* se termine par un *t* simple; dans l'autre par un *t* suivi d'un crochet.

- b) Même pièce, Copie 1785.

- c) Même pièce, même titre, sans l'indication du nom du graveur. Reproduction en sens inverse avec cette épigraphe :

*Dans les ténèbres la vérité perce, et cependant elle  
est outragée.*

- d) Même pièce, même titre. Réduction, les figures tournées du même côté que dans l'original.

*L. C. de Carmontelle del. — Peter Gleich sculp.*

Petit in-4° en largeur.

128. a) LES ADIEUX DE CALAS A SA FAMILLE. *Dan. Chodowiecki fec. 1767.*

Jean Calas est assis; son fils Pierre lui baise la main; une de

1. J'ai vu la plupart de ces pièces au *Cabinet des Estampes* de la Bibliothèque Impériale ou dans la magnifique collection historique de feu M. Hennin qui, comme M. Achille Devéria, avait facilité mes recherches avec une bienveillance que j'aime à rappeler.

Je dois des indications utiles et nombreuses à M. Henri Vienne, capitaine au 1<sup>er</sup> régiment de hussards, qui a fait une étude spéciale de l'*Iconographie* de l'affaire des Calas.

Un inventaire rédigé après le décès de Mme Calas nous apprend qu'elle avait dans son salon et que ses filles conservèrent trois tableaux qui étaient leur portraits au pastel. Il serait intéressant de découvrir ce que ces trois portraits sont devenus. Nous savons seulement que le moins précieux, celui de Rose était, il y a trente ou quarante ans, dans la famille du docteur Varnier.

ses filles est à genoux et l'entoure de ses bras; l'autre, debout, appuie sa tête contre celle de son père. Un geôlier est occupé à ouvrir les fers qu'il a aux pieds. M<sup>me</sup> Calas est évanouie dans un fauteuil, devant lequel une Bible est ouverte sur un guéridon; Lavaysse et Jeanne Viguiet lui font respirer des sels. De l'autre côté, deux soldats qui gardent la porte introduisent un moine<sup>1</sup>.

Dans ce premier état, le moine porte une calotte et un rosaire, la tête est moins éclairée, et surtout la planche moins surpassée.

Au bas, en marge, les six vers suivants :

Infortuné Calas ! Famille désolée !  
 Qui ne compatirait à vos vives douleurs ?  
 L'Univers voit en vous l'innocence immolée ;  
 Mais s'il ne peut, hélas ! que vous donner des pleurs,  
 La vérité n'est pas dans tous les temps voilée,  
 Chés la postérité vous aurez des vengeurs.

Grand in-f° en largeur. N° 48 de l'œuvre de Chodowiecki, décrit par Jacoby. Berlin, 1808.

b) Même pièce, même date.

La planche est plus finie; la tête du moine plus ombrée, coiffée d'un capuchon; le rosaire a disparu.

Au bas on lit :

« Je crains Dieu.... et n'ai pas d'autre crainte. »

*Inv. peint et gravé par D. Chodowiecki à Berlin 1768.*

c) Même pièce 1768.

Plus finie encore en quelques endroits.

d) *Der Abschied des Calas von seiner familie.*

*Dem Herrn Daniel Chodowiecki zugeeignet.*

1. Cette scène est imaginaire. Il n'est pas vrai que Calas ait revu sa femme ni ses enfants avant de mourir. Il n'est pas douteux que la figure de Jean Calas, souvent reproduite depuis, ne soit également de convention. Chodowiecki lui a donné des traits qui rappellent d'une manière frappante ceux de ses enfants. Mais c'est là une erreur; car son fils Pierre et les deux sœurs ressemblaient beaucoup, tous trois, à leur mère, ce qu'il est très-facile de vérifier dans l'estampe n° 127, que nous avons reproduite. Cette ressemblance est assez marquée pour n'être pas contestable. Mais il n'est pas à croire que le type de figure de Mme Calas, si reconnaissable chez ses enfants, fût aussi celui de leur père, dont il n'existe aucun portrait authentique.

Ce double motif, le caractère tout à fait imaginaire de cette scène et de la principale figure, nous a décidé à ne point reproduire cette estampe qui n'a rien d'historique, quoiqu'on la considère en général comme le pendant de celle de Carmontelle.



*Durch dessen ergebensten Diener u : Freund. Joh. Elias Haid.*

*Nach dem original Gemählde von gleicher Gröse (sic)*

*Daniel Chodowiecki pinxit. —*

*Joh. Elias Haid sculpsit. Aug. Vind. 1777.*

In-f° en largeur.

e) Même sujet, même titre.

*Daniel Chodowiecki inv. et delin.*

*Andreas Leonhard sculpsit et excudit. Norimb. 1790.*

In-f° en largeur.

f) Même sujet.

*Nach Chodowiecki gestochen*

On lit au haut: *5ter Aufzug. 5ter Auftritt.* Cette gravure a été faite pour une pièce de théâtre, probablement pour celle de C. F. Weisze, voir plus haut: 109.

In-12 en hauteur.

129. a) *Les Adieu (sic) de Calas.*

*Joh. H. Lips. sculp. 1778.*

Le groupe du père et de la jeune fille, en bustes, emprunté au sujet précédent, dans un médaillon rond équarri.

A l'angle supérieur sont les chiffres suivants, XIV, p. 68. Je ne sais à quelle collection ils se rapportent.

In-4° en longueur.

b) *Les Adieu de Calas, nach Chodowiecki (sic).*

Reproduction de la même estampe. Même format.

c) Copie

Barlad sculp.

In-8°.

d) Copie

Boulay del. *Barbaut* sc. (sur bois).

In-4°.

130. LES ADIEUX DE CALAS A SA FAMILLE.

Vignette gravée au bistre par E. Hemme d'après Agram, en hauteur.

Un prisonnier jeune, dans les bras duquel se jettent trois femmes. Figures, costumes, tout est de pure fantaisie.

131. CALLAS (sic).

*L. Buchhorn* dir.

*Zwickau, b. d. Gebr. Schumann.*

Portrait de Calas gravé sur cuivre.

C'est la figure imaginée par Chodowiecki dans *les Adieux* Calas lève les yeux au ciel. Il porte le bonnet de prisonnier, — De 3/4, à gauche.

### 132. Portrait de Voltaire.

*Dessiné et gravé à l'eau forte par Queverdo. — Terminé par Massol.*

Médailion rond, sur un socle qui renferme une réduction de l'estampe de Chodowiecki, avec le titre et l'épigraphe de l'original. On lit au-dessus du portrait :

..... *Qu'il ne soit qu'un parti parmi nous,  
Celui du bien public et du salut de tous.*

Au-dessous sont figurées les Œuvres de Voltaire avec cette inscription :

*La loi, dans tout état, doit être universelle;  
Les mortels, quels qu'ils soient, sont égaux devant elle.*

In-4° en hauteur.

### 133 a) LES EFFETS DE LA SENSIBILITÉ SUR LES QUATRE DIFFÉRENTS TEMPÉRAMENTS.

*Non omnes pariter tanta infortunia terrent.*

D. Chodowiecki del.

Quatre personnages examinent un tableau placé sur un chevalet. C'est l'estampe n° 128, *les Adieux de Calas à sa famille*. Le bilieux s'emporte, le sanguin pleure, le mélancolique, les bras pendants, paraît atterré; le lymphatique est un gros homme assis et immobile qui regarde avec une sorte de curiosité flegmatique.

Qu'on ait choisi ce sujet comme type des impressions variées que produit un même fait sur les divers caractères, c'est un indice assez curieux du grand retentissement qu'eut cette affaire et de la sympathie générale qu'on accordait aux Calas.

In-18 en largeur.

b) Même sujet.

D. Chodowiecki (sic) del.

Joh. H. Lips. fec.

In-12 en largeur.

Pièce gravée pour les *Essais physiognomoniques de Lavater*. Le tableau des *Adieux* est au trait et divers accessoires manquent.

c) Même sujet, même format que le précédent. Copie presque au trait.

Mauvaise reproduction.

d) Le *Magasin pittoresque* (1865, p. 49), a reproduit cette composition.

### 134. a) *Le Déjeuné de Ferney.*

*De Non, d'après nature à Ferney, le 4 Juillet 1775. — Gravé*

par Née et Masquelier, même année. Se vend à Paris chez les Auteurs, rue des Francs-Bourgeois près l'Arquebusier, P<sup>te</sup> St Michel.

Médailion ovale, petit in-4° en largeur.

Voltaire est à demi couché sur son lit. Mme Denis est assise à son chevet devant un guéridon sur lequel le déjeuner est servi ; derrière elle est une jeune servante. Au pied du lit, M. de Laborde, fermier général <sup>1</sup>, assis dans un fauteuil, parle avec vivacité. Père Adam, debout derrière lui, joint les mains, comme saisi par ce qu'il entend. En dedans des rideaux du lit, à la place où les catholiques suspendent un bénitier ou un crucifix, est placée l'estampe de la *Malheureuse famille Calas* (n° 127) dans un cadre. Elle est très-facilement reconnaissable malgré sa petitesse, et le nom de Calas s'y distingue nettement.

b) Même sujet, titre et format, à l'eau forte pure.

### 135. LE TRIOMPHE DE VOLTAIRE.

*Inventé, dessiné et gravé par A. Duplessis, peintre et graveur d'histoire, d'après le tableau original peint par lui-même, qui est au cabinet de Voltaire.*

In-f° maximo en largeur.

Vaste et très-médiocre composition, où Mme Calas, ses filles, son fils, Lavaysse et Viguière paraissent parmi les accusés que Voltaire a défendus. Les figures sont imitées d'après les portraits de Carmonette (n° 127).

### 136. Gravure au burin, pour l'héroïde de Blin de Sainmore (voir plus haut : 58).

*Ch. Eisen inv.*

*E. de Ghendt sculp.*

Elle représente le magasin de Calas. Le corps de Marc-Antoine est étendu sur des ballots d'étoffes, la corde au cou. Sa mère se penche sur lui, et s'efforce de le rappeler à la vie. Le père au désespoir, lève au ciel ses mains jointes en poussant des cris violents. Un jeune homme qui entre, une chandelle à la main (Pierre ou Lavaysse), s'arrête épouvanté. Les habits du mort sont pliés sur le comptoir. Un tabouret renversé, le billot, la corde coupée, indiquent comment le suicide a eu lieu.

In-8° en hauteur.

### 137. Frontispice de l'ouvrage intitulé : *Jean Calas ou l'innocent condamné*, par A. S. (Voir plus haut, n° 75.)

Cette mauvaise gravure représente Voltaire accueillant une femme qui semble être en deuil et que suivent un homme et une autre femme.

A gauche, un échafaud surmonté d'un gibet, etc., que foudroie du haut du ciel un Génie ailé, armé d'une épée et d'un bouclier à tête de méduse. Aucune des figures, pas même celle de Voltaire, ne sont des portraits.

1. C'est une note de S. Cole. (Mss. 5884 au British Museum) qui m'a fait connaître le nom de ce personnage, en qui j'avais cru deviner le docteur Tronchin.

**138. Voltaire promettant son appui à la famille Calas (Éloge de Voltaire par la Harpe).**

*Bergeret pinx. et del. — Lith. de C. de Last.*

Voltaire déjeune sous un arbre, devant sa porte, avec une jeune femme qui lit (Mme de Villette?). Une carriole couverte vient de s'arrêter; trois femmes en deuil, couvertes de longs voiles, un homme et une jeune servante en sont descendus et implorent Voltaire; une des femmes est à ses genoux. Voltaire les accueille, et en signe de protection, il étend sur leurs têtes inclinées sa main qui tient une plume. A l'exception de sa figure, toutes les têtes sont purement imaginaires.

In-4° en largeur.

**39. Quatre scènes d'une pièce de théâtre sur Calas.**

Suite d'estampes cataloguées sous le n° 610 de la seconde vente Laterode (20 Déc. 1858. Vignères, expert).

**40. Gravure de l'époque de la Révolution.**

Delannay, de Flesselles, Berthier, Foulon, chacun portant sa tête au bout d'une pique, veulent entrer dans la barque de Caron qui refuse de les y recevoir; il n'accueille que le pendu Remy François.

On voit, sur la rive opposée du Styx, Calas, parmi d'autres victimes de l'ancien régime.

(Voir *Histoire de la Société Française pendant la Révolution* par MM. de Goncourt. In-12, p. 256.)

**41. Portrait en pied de l'acteur Villeneuve, rôle de Calas, dans le mélodrame de Ducange.**

On lit en haut : « VILLENEUVE, Ambigu. » — En bas : « Calas, pièce de ce nom. »

L'acteur lève les yeux et les bras vers le ciel.

In-12 en longueur.

**42. Les sept gravures sur bois du 8<sup>e</sup> cahier des Causes Célèbres.**  
(Voir plus haut le n° 86.)

Représentant : 1<sup>re</sup> Mme Calas essayant de secourir le suicidé. — 2<sup>e</sup> Calas découvrant son fils pendu. — 3<sup>e</sup> Calas, sur la charrette, bénissant sa maison. — 4<sup>e</sup> L'estampe d'après Carmontelle. — 5<sup>e</sup> L'exécution. — 6<sup>e</sup> Évanouissement de Lavaysse. — 7<sup>e</sup> Un vieillard dans les fers.

**XI. — JOURNAUX ET RECUEILS PÉRIODIQUES.**

Nous avons essayé de donner l'énumération complète des publications spéciales auxquelles a donné lieu l'affaire Calas. Il serait très-long, difficile, et au fond peu utile, de recenser tous les articles de journaux, de revues, de dictionnaires, de recueils de *Causes célèbres*.

Il suffira de quelques indications sommaires.

Tous les journaux de l'époque ont retenti de cette cause, dès que Voltaire l'eut prise en main. Il faut consulter sur ce sujet la *Correspondance littéraire de Grimm*, celle de *Diderot*, celle de *La Harpe*, les *Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont*, l'*Année littéraire de Fréron* et surtout le *Journal Encyclopédique* dont le principal rédacteur, Pierre Rousseau de Toulouse, défendit les Calas, correspondit avec Voltaire et répondit, le 15 juin 1764, par une lettre importante (t. 4, 3<sup>e</sup> partie, p. 124) à celle qui avait paru, contre les Calas, sous les initiales de Mme de M.

Plusieurs des brochures que nous avons signalées ont été insérées dans un recueil, voltairien par le titre non moins que par le contenu, l'*Évangile du jour*, Londres (Amsterdam), 1769-1778, (Telles sont les lettres du marquis d'Argence de Dirac et la réponse de Voltaire, la déclaration juridique de Jeanne Viguiier, t. 3, p. 21, 46.)

Une feuille qui paraissait à Toulouse sous le titre d'*Affiches, Annonces et Avis divers*, contient aussi quelques renseignements (20 mars 1765, etc.)

Une prétendue lettre de Lefualde-Conté à Spalingrier (Toulouse, mars 1762), contenant un récit tout à fait imaginaire du supplice de Calas, a été publiée d'abord par une revue anglaise, *the Metropolitan*, traduite dans le journal français *le Temps* (31 mars 1831) et reproduite, sous toutes réserves, dans le *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français* (t. 3, p. 626). C'est une pièce sans aucune valeur, œuvre d'un faussaire ou d'un romancier, mais conçue dans un sens entièrement favorable à Calas.

Le dernier recueil cité contient (t. 4, p. 239 et suiv.) UNE LETTRE INÉDITE DE ROUSSEAU ET 19 DE VOLTAIRE AU SUJET DE LA RÉHABILITATION DE CALAS. Nous avons fait usage des dernières, mais le correspondant du *Bulletin* s'est trompé, quant à la lettre de Rousseau; elle est antérieure de 15 jours au suicide de Marc-Antoine, et se rapporte au procès du pasteur Rochette et des trois frères De Grenier; c'est à eux que Rousseau refusa le secours de sa plume avec un égoïsme à peine déguisé.

Le *Journal Général* a publié en 1837 deux articles, suivis de deux autres en avril 1843, dans la même feuille, paraissant sous le titre qu'elle porte encore aujourd'hui, *le Droit*. L'auteur anonyme de ce double travail était M. Amédée-Thomas Latour, substitut du procureur général, puis juge au tribunal de première instance à Toulouse, auteur d'une brochure sur *le Parlement, la bazoche et le barreau de Toulouse*. M. Thomas Latour est mort en 1856. Il tenait de M. le marquis de Latresne, ancien procureur général au Parlement de Toulouse et de M. le marquis de Catelan, ancien avocat général à la même Cour, la tra-

dition, hostile aux Calas, qui s'était perpétuée au sein de la magistrature toulousaine.

Lorsque parut la brochure de M. Huc, en 1855, les feuilles ultra-catholiques, telles que l'*Univers*, le *Correspondant*, adoptèrent le travail de cet avocat, et à Toulouse, un journal intitulé l'*Aigle* se prononça dans le même sens; c'est ainsi que la culpabilité des Calas se trouva proclamée de nouveau par les feuilles périodiques.

Nous ne citerons plus que le *Dictionnaire de la Conversation*; l'article *Calas* est de M. de Pongerville, de l'Académie française. La juste indignation de l'auteur en racontant cette tragique histoire a nui, non-seulement au ton général de sa notice, qui est violent, mais à la précision et à l'exactitude de son récit.

## XII. — DESIDERATA.

Malgré des efforts longtemps soutenus, nous ne sommes pas arrivé à établir une liste tout à fait complète des publications auxquelles le procès Calas a donné lieu.

1° Nous n'avons pu nous procurer la *Lettre de Mme de M\*\*\* de Toulouse au sujet du malheureux Calas*. Nous ne savons où ni sous quelle forme elle a paru.

2° Voltaire se plaint quelque part d'un jésuite irlandais (est-ce Needham ?) qui, dans la plus insipide des brochures, traite d'*ennemis de la Religion* les défenseurs des Calas et les Maîtres des Requêtes qui les ont absous. — Nous n'avons trouvé ni cette *insipide brochure*, ni aucun renseignement sur cet écrit ou sur son auteur.

3° J'ai eu le regret de ne pouvoir trouver à la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal une liasse classée autrefois par les soins de feu M. Vieillard, depuis Bibliothécaire du Sénat, et qui contenait une lettre autographe de M. de Morlhon<sup>1</sup>, et un imprimé, qui doit être un écrit satirique contre les magistrats de Toulouse et paraît distinct de ceux que j'ai indiqués plus haut. Malgré l'extrême obligeance de M. Vieillard, qui a bien voulu m'accompagner dans mes recherches, la liasse égarée n'a pu être retrouvée.

1. Barnabé de Morlhon, premier président-présidial, juge-mage et lieutenant-général-né en la Sénéchaussée de Toulouse. — Il se pourrait que Blin de Sainmore, qui a été conservateur de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, et qui est l'auteur de la lettre de Calas à sa femme et à ses enfants (voir ci-dessus n° 58), eût réuni quelques pièces sur les Calas.

4° M. le marquis de Catelan, ancien avocat général au Parlement de Toulouse, mort pair de France en 1838, s'était occupé de recherches sur l'affaire Calas. Nous doutons que son travail ait été achevé; quoi qu'il en soit, il n'a point paru. Il a montré un jour à M. Moquin-Tandon des pièces inédites (au moins alors) sur l'affaire Calas, et entre autres une lettre du Père Bourges.

5° La correspondance de M. Dumas, qui reçut chez lui à Paris les demoiselles Calas, avec Debrus, et peut-être quelques autres pièces, se trouvaient, en 1857, à Romainmôtiers, et bientôt après à Montreux, dans le canton de Vaud, entre les mains de M. de Bray. Je n'ai pu voir ces papiers.

FIN.

## TABLE ANALYTIQUE.

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- Aguesseau (d'), cité 265.  
 Albigeois, 4-9.  
 Aldéguier (d'), judicieuse observation, 97. — Cité 105, 280, 298, 318.  
 Alembert (d'), chargé de diriger Mme Calas, 286, — ému de sa visite, 235, — rapporte à Voltaire un mot odieux, 236.  
 Alison, agent du duc de Fitzjames, cité 172, 188.  
 Alphonse de France, comte de Toulouse, 9.  
 Alquier, témoin, 59, 248, 173.  
 Amblard, subdélégué. Ses lettres, 16 61, 129, 199, 208, 226, 267, 315.  
 Anecdote légendaire et apocryphe, 320.  
 Angliviel (Maurice), héritier des papiers de la Beaumelle, VIII, 175.  
 Annales du Capitoulat, lacune significative, 36, 434.  
 Antoine de Padoue (St), fait brûler un grand nombre d'hérétiques, 6.  
 Anville (Duchesse d'), 221, 232, 290, 456.  
 Arbanère, procureur, sous-prieur des pénitents blancs, 107, 167.  
 Argental (comte et comtesse d'), Mme Calas leur est adressée, 224, — tiennent des assemblées où sont débattus les intérêts de Mme Calas, 260.  
 Arnal, témoin, 148.  
 Arnaud (Barthélemye, femme), témoin 27, 158.  
 A. S. *Jean-Calas ou l'innocent condamné*, 301.  
 Assemblée législative (l'), reçoit Louis à sa barre, 276.  
 Assesseurs des Capitouls, 36.  
 Audibert fut le premier qui intéressa Voltaire aux Calas, 213, — cité 174, — visite Mme Calas, 224.  
 Audouy (femme), nie les propos qu'on lui prête, 145.  
 Audra (l'abbé), 238, 458.  
 Auriac (le président d'). Voltaire et la sœur Fraisse agissent sur lui, 121. — Nanette le visite, 288.  
 Azimond (le chanoine), témoin, 49, 62, 91, 164, 248.  
 Bachaumont, cité 256, 461, 465, 492, 494.  
 Barbier (M.), IX, 274.  
 Baron, témoin, 161.  
 Baroque (arrêt), ce qu'était une sentence ainsi nommée, 127.  
 Barré (l'abbé), 310.  
 Bastard d'Estang (vicomte de), *les Parlements de France*, 317, cité 35, 453.  
 Beaux, avocat, — ami de Marc-Antoine, 47, 164.  
 Benaben (l'abbé), témoin, 57, 84, 86.  
 Benoît (M. le professeur), VII.  
 Bergeret, témoin, 153, 160.  
 Bernard (St), 5.  
 Bernis (cardinal de), réponse équivoque sur les Calas, 215.  
 Berryat Saint-Prix (M.), XVI.  
 Bertin, contrôleur général, 237.  
 Beuchot, IX, X.  
 Bézard, Conventionnel, propose et l'Assemblée décrète que l'État payera les dettes de Calas, 278.  
 Bille ou Billot, 81, 178, — objections réfutées, 141.  
 Boissy (P.-E. de), chargé de continuer l'inquisition, 129.  
 Bojal (de) conseiller, rendit exécutoire, dit-on, l'arrêt de Calas, 448.  
 Bou, tailleur, 429, sa femme offre en



- vain de déposer en faveur de Pierre Calas, 206.
- Bonafous, juge catholique, confia ses filles à Calas, 40, 41.
- Bonrepos (Riquet de), procureur général, 447. — Dénonce la *Calomnie confondue* de Rabaut, 184. — Distribue aux juges la réponse de Contezat, *ib.* — Épigramme contre lui, 260. — Jugé sévèrement par Voltaire, 447. — Obtient 10000 livres de brevet de retenue, 448. — Requier la mort de Mme Calas, Pierre, Lavaysse, et la réclusion à vie de Jeannette, 205. — Sa question au P. Bourges, 203. — Son réquisitoire contre Rabaut, 184.
- Bordes, témoin, 159.
- Borel, ancien capitoul, 62.
- Boulade (Mme), rend témoignage à la tolérance des Calas, 40, 41.
- Bourges ou Bourgis (le P.), dominicain, chargé de confesser Calas, 197. — Consulté par Lagane, 155. — rend un beau témoignage à Calas, 203. — Sa dernière question au mourant, 201. — Tend un piège à Pierre, 209.
- Boyer, capitoul, 126.
- Boyer, curé, 47.
- Brief-Intendit, ce que c'était, 115. — Était alors aboli, excepté à Toulouse, 115. — Cité 349.
- Brissot de Warville, 444.
- Bros dit Coudom, témoin, 161.
- Bruyère témoin, nie ce qu'on lui prête, 145.
- Bruys (Pierre de), 5.
- Calas (Anne-Rose), voyez *Rose*.
- Calas (Anne-Rose Cabibel, veuve), adressée par Voltaire à d'Alembert, 226, 235. — A M. et Mme d'Argental, 224. — A Élie de Beaumont, 229. — A Lamignon, 229. — Arrive seule à Paris, 223. — Dangers qu'elle brave, 222. — Écrit à Cazeing au sujet de ses fils, 271. — Extraits de ses interrogatoires et confrontations, 43, 98, 109, 147, etc. — Jugée par l'abbé Salvan, 43. — On essaye de l'épouvanter, 204. — Et de la séduire par l'exemple et l'abjuration de Pierre, 205. — Reçoit les félicitations du lieutenant général du guet, 250. — Représente, avec ses enfants, la famille de Voltaire à ses funérailles, 275. — Reste à Paris, 271. — Ses lettres à Cazeing, 247, 268, 271. — A Delamotte, 437. — A la Beaumelle, 369. — A Voltaire, 370. — sur le suicide de Marc-Antoine, 73, 217. — Et l'opinion de Voltaire sur cette lettre, 77. — Sa mort, 276. — Sa pauvreté 266-268. — Sa réponse sur le parricide imputé aux protestants, 68. — Sa signature, 76. — Sa tendresse pour Louis, 24. — Sa tolérance, 43. — Se constitue prisonnière, 241, 250. — Se retire près de Montauban, 222. — Ses funérailles, 371. — Ses sollicitations à Paris, 234. — A Versailles, 240. — Soins et désintéressement du géolier, 242. — Son acquittement, 207. — Son âge, 44. — Son caractère, 41. — Son inquiétude pour son mari, 75. — Son mariage, 41. — Son origine et ses alliances, 41. — Son pseudonyme, 226. — Tente de sauver Marc-Antoine, 75. — Transmet à Maurepas la lettre de Maupeou, 268. — Visite Voltaire à Ferney, 272. — A Paris, *ib.*
- Calas (Anne-Rose — Veuve Duvoisin), Voy. *Nanette*.
- Calas (Jean-Louis-Donat. — ) Voy. *Donat*.
- Calas (Jean — ) — Anecdotes apocryphes, 320. — Arrêt qui oblige ses créanciers à un accommodement, 55. — Dernier dialogue avec le père Bourges, 201. — Effet de sa mort sur l'opinion, 261. — Extraits de ses interrogatoires et confrontations, 152, 167, 168, 250, etc. — Étend le cadavre sur le plancher, 79. — Monument que lui décrète la Convention, 277. — Paye les dettes de Louis, 60. — Prétentions de ses enfants, 48, 56. — Procès-verbal de son exécution, 192. — Refuse des fonds à Marc-Antoine; pourquoi, 200. — Sa belle réponse au P. Bourges au pied de l'échafaud, 191. — Sa douceur envers ses juges, 200. — Sa réponse muette à David, 202. — Sa signature, 211. — Sauve ses coaccusés par sa fermeté, 205. — Sérénité de sa mort, 198, 199. — Ses biens au pillage, 266. — Ses paroles sur la conversion de Louis, 59. — Son arrêt de mort, 190. — Son entretien avec Delamotte, 59. — Son entrevue avec Louis chez Borel, 62. — Son irritation contre les Durand, 58. — Son manque de ressources, 165. — Son mensonge destiné à sauver l'honneur du suicidé, 79. — Son nom sur le char funèbre qui porta Voltaire au Panthéon, 275. — Son origine et son caractère, 39. — S'oublie pour Lavaysse, 201. — Tolérant envers les catholiques, 40. — Traite Marc-Ant-

- toine tendrement, 40. 152. — Trouve Marc-Antoine pendu, 78.
- Calas (Jean-Pierre —). Voy. *Pierre*.
- Calas (Donat-Louis —). Voy. *Louis*.
- Calas (Marc-Antoine —). Voy. *Marc-Antoine*.
- Calomnie confondue* (la —), 175. — Les deux auteurs de cet écrit, 176, — est brûlé par le bourreau, 188.
- Calvet témoin, 39.
- Calvin accusé d'ordonner le parricide, 181, — insulté dans l'église de Saint-Sernin, 13.
- Cambon, vicaire général, 95.
- Camoine, chirurgien, 148.
- Camp (Marthe), — 478.
- Canning (Elisabeth), 231.
- Caperan, chez qui l'archevêque Crussol avait placé Louis, 160.
- Capitouls, 28, 34, 37, avaient intérêt à condamner une fois le procès commencé, 124. — Délibération et sentence, 125. — Illégalité de l'arrêt, 125.
- Capoulac, témoin, 50, 159, 160.
- Carbonnel, rapporteur devant les capitouls, 121, — conclut à l'acquittement, 125.
- Carmontelle, 461.
- Carrière, avocat, ami de Marc-Antoine, 83, — ses visites au prisonnier et ses conseils, *ib.*, — ses trois lettres, 84, et 441, — le parti qu'on en tire contre les Calas, 86. — L'incident prouve pour eux, 87.
- Cassan-Clairac, rapporteur devant le parlement, 132. — Écrit son rapport chez les Chartreux, *ib.* — Épigramme contre lui, 133. — Veut condamner Pierre aux galères perpétuelles, 207.
- Cassation. — La requête de Mme Calas jugée admissible, 238. — prononcée par le roi en son conseil, 247.
- Catelan (M. de —), ancien procureur général. — Pièces concernant le procès, 157, 512.
- Cathala, banquier, 216, 217.
- Catholicité (Actes de —), imposés à tout protestant, 163.
- Caturce (Jean de —), brûlé à Toulouse, 10.
- Cazalès, curé, 105.
- Cazals (le chevalier de —), héros d'un conte mensonger, 100 et 309.
- Cazalus, témoin, 138.
- Cazeing, fabriquant de mignonette, 26, — qualifié judiciairement espèce d'abbé, 26. — mis en liberté 38, — sans ordonnance, 100. — accueille le jeune Lavaysse, 71. — soupçonné d'avoir reçu chez lui l'assemblée protes-
- tante où le meurtre aurait été décidé, 93, — quitte Toulouse, 211.
- Cazères témoin, 206.
- Challier, avocat, ami de Marc-Antoine, 53. — Obtient par ruse d'être entendu, 92. — Sa déposition, 165. — Seul témoin à décharge devant les capitouls et le parlement, 92.
- Charlemagne, capitulaire cité, 69.
- Chazel, correspondant de Voltaire, 218.
- Chénier (J.-M. de) : *Jean Calas ou l'école des juges*, 298. — un vers de —, 133.
- Chirac, capitoul, 104.
- Chiron dit Théodore, pasteur, lettres à Paul Rabaut, 215.
- Choiseul (duc de —), Voltaire lui écrit, 211. L'intéresse aux Calas, 221. — Il envoie à Voltaire la *St-James Chronicle*, 233. — Fait juger les Calas par le grand Conseil, 239.
- Clausade, 22, — quitte Toulouse, 211.
- Clément XIII, 14.
- Confrontation, 114.
- Conseil (Grand —), 239.
- Contezat (l'abbé de —), déclare que Louis fut retiré de chez ses parents, 63, — ses *Observations* sur la Calomnie confondue, 179, avoue que Rabaut a pacifié la contrée, 184.
- Convention nationale : décret en l'honneur de Calas, 277. — Remerciement de ses enfants, *ib.*
- Coq (le père —), témoin, 150.
- Coquerel (Charles —), auteur de l'*Histoire des Églises du Désert*, III, — son récit de l'affaire jugé par M. de Polenz, 321, — cité 52, 111, 175, 176, 232, 377, 378, 479.
- Coras, 431, sur le capitoulat, 31.
- Corde (la) a-t-elle été coupée, 443, 82, 285.
- Court de Gébelin cité 55, 211, 218, 226, 250, 252, 266, 283, 298, défend Calvin contre Contezat, 181, exagère les torts de Louis Calas, XI, — répand la nouvelle de la réhabilitation, 252. — Ses *Toulousaines*, 245. — Voltaire en retarde la publication, 246.
- Credo quia ineptum*, 103.
- Cris entendus du dehors, 20, 137 à 139.
- Croisade (première) entre chrétiens, 5.
- Crussol d'Uzès d'Amboise (Fr. de —) archevêque de Toulouse, 57, 60.
- Curé de Saint-Étienne ne refuse pas d'in-humer Marc-Antoine, 105, — celui du Taur lui dispute cette fonction, *ib.*
- Damilaville visite Mme Calas à la Conciergerie, 244. — Voltaire lui écrit, 215. 219, 230, 244, 246, 248, 259, 260, 289, 456, 463.

- Danduze et Marion Couderc (femmes), témoins, 152.
- Darles, témoin, redoute l'excommunication, 90.
- Daumier ou Dolmière, Catherine, faux témoin, 150, 248.
- David de Beaudrigue (F-R), Capitoul. — Anecdote qui le concerne, 470. — Blâmé par Saint-Florentin, 32. — Consulte le bourreau, 142, 260. — Contre la Beaumelle, 30. — Dans la maison Calas, 23. — Fait arrêter tous ceux qu'il trouve dans la maison, 25. — Fait éteindre un flambeau, *ib.* — Graves omissions, 24, 29. — Jugé par la Beaumelle, 432. — Menace les accusés de la torture, 82. — N'était pas un traître de mélodrame, xi. — Obtient par une intrigue des funérailles catholiques pour Marc-Antoine, 104. — Pourquoi il monta sur l'échafaud de Calas, 201. — Prend les rumeurs de la foule pour une preuve, 23. — Requête d'inscription en faux contre lui, 33. — Sa correspondance avec Saint-Florentin, 32, 340, 348, 351, 352, 357, 359, 369. — Sa dernière interrogation, 202. — Sa destitution, 32, 250. — Sa fin, 279. — Sa réponse à un collègue, 27. — Ses excès de pouvoir à propos d'affiches de théâtre, 30. — Son caractère, 31. — Son procès-verbal, 338. — Son reproche à Lamarque, 144. — Tend un piège à Lavaysse, 118.
- Debru, clerc tonsuré — affreuse calomnie, 148.
- Debrus, 216, 217.
- Delamote, conseiller au Parlement, annonce à Calas la conversion de Louis, 59. — Essaye en vain de convertir Marc-Antoine, 167. — Intermédiaire entre Louis et son père, 62. — Ne fut pas entendu, 167. — Soupçonné à tort d'offres odieuses à Nanette, 436. — Sollicite auprès de Mme Calas une place dans les colonies, *ib.* — Belle réponse de Mme Calas, 437.
- Delibes, greffier de la geôle, 85.
- Delpech Antoine, témoin, 21, 50, 159.
- Destremx (M. Léonce —), viii.
- Dillon, archevêque de Toulouse, 93 — faveur étrange accordée par lui aux membres du Parlement, 243.
- Dolet, cité 131.
- Domenge-Lavigne (la fille —), et sa mère, faux témoins, 150.
- Domerc, secrétaire d'Amblard, 20, 316, 337.
- Dominique (Saint —) crée son ordre à Toulouse, 8. — Jugé par Dante, — 8.
- Donat Calas, 64. — Examiné par Voltaire, 215. — Reçoit avec lui la nouvelle de la réhabilitation, 252. — Sa mort, 230. — Son Mémoire par Voltaire, 230.
- Ducange (Victor). — Calas, drame, 298.
- Ducos, sur les pénitents, 111.
- Dugué, prêtre, témoin, accuse les protestants et les Calas, 97, 347.
- Dumas, recueille Mme Calas, 220.
- Du Mége, historien de Toulouse et continuateur de Dom Vayssette, passionné et inexact, 86, 100, 129.
- Dupleix de Bacquencourt, dernier rapporteur de l'affaire, 247. — Est chargé d'un don pour Mme Calas, 265.
- Du Puget, président, 448. — Demande des lettres de cachet contre les Dlls Calas, 361. — Épigramme contre lui, 447. — Ses lettres à Saint-Florentin, 358, 360.
- Durand (la famille —). — cache Louis chez elle, 59. — Déposition défavorable de la mère, 160. — Favorable du père, 153. — Ennemie des Calas, 57. — Son influence sur Louis, 107.
- Duroux, procureur. — A la procuration de Mme Calas, 243. — Conséquences de sa suspension, 120. — Suspendu par David de Beaudrigue, 33.
- Duverdy (M.) — Son opinion dans la *Gazette des Tribunaux* sur l'arrêt des Capitouls, 127. — Sur celui des maîtres des Requêtes, 367.
- Duvoisin, pasteur, 291, 472.
- Duvoisin-Calas (Alexandre —), 293, 479. — Une lettre de — 301.
- Élie de Beaumont, avocat des Calas, ses factums cités 111, 129, 147, 189, 249 256. — Demande en vain qu'on produise un témoin à charge imaginaire, 250. — Enrôlé par Voltaire, 229. — Loué par lui, 234. — Son factum corrigé, 234. — Son caractère, 456.
- Enlèvements d'enfants protestants, 283. — Célébrés par les Jésuites, 284.
- Espailiac, garçon coiffeur, accusé de se concerter avec Monyer et Louis, 121. — Décrété de prise de corps, 122. — Ses contes aux frères tailleurs, 121. — Refuse de les répéter devant la justice, 122, 139.
- Estampe d'après Carmontelle, 268, 461, 504. — La vente en est interdite, 268.
- Exsupère, évêque de Toulouse, 4.
- Fabre, Alexandre, témoin, 62.
- Fabre, Joseph, frère-tailleur, 121, 122

- Faget J.P.B. — chef du consistoire, c'est-à-dire des Capitouls, 35, 38, 144.
- Faits justificatifs — Ils sont écartés sans examen, 39, 65, 115, 141, 150. — Les juges en permettaient ou en refusaient l'examen, 115. — Renvoyés toujours à la fin de l'instruction, 115, 445. — Sudre en propose onze, 151.
- Fargès, maître des requêtes, 251.
- Faure, chirurgien, 145.
- Faustin Hélie. *Histoire et Théorie de la Procédure Criminelle*, 90, 93, 98, 114, 115, 170.
- Fers (les condamnés mis aux —), 128.
- Figueras (Guillaume de —), 6.
- Filettiers (rue des —), 20.
- Foulques de Marseille, troubadour, puis évêque de Toulouse, 7.
- Fournier (Collection de M. —) — xvi. 56, 65, 92, 211, 241, 243, 245, 253, 255, 258, 259, 266, 270, 272, 288, 290, 292, 293, 295, 436, 463, 466, 477, 480, etc.
- Fraisse (la sœur Anne-Julie), 66, 263. — Agit pour les Calas, 287. — Blâme Louis, 54, 246. — Reçoit l'estampe avec joie, 409, 463. — Sa fin, 294. Ses bontés pour Nanette, 286. — Ses lettres, 381-428. — Son caractère, 287. — Voltaire ravi de sa lettre à d'Auriac, la publie, 288.
- Fréron accusé d'avoir calomnié les Calas, 69.
- Gastambide (M. —), copie des pièces du procès, v. 157.
- Genève. — Déclaration de la compagnie des pasteurs, 179. — Dépôts de huit négociants, 248.
- Gorsse élève chirurgien, 21, 22, 25, 79.
- Gondelin, 12.
- Gramond (le président), cité 1.
- Grenier (les trois frères de —), exécutés à Toulouse, 15.
- Grimm, cité, 66, 240, 256, 259, 263, 285, 461, 466.
- Griole, témoin, 44, 49, 91.
- Guyonnet (Demoiselle), témoin, 164.
- Hornoy (M. d' —) certifie que Voltaire n'a pas renié les Calas, 274.
- Houlès-Lagarrigue père et fils, témoins, 41.
- Hubert (Dame —), s'établit jour et nuit chez les demoiselles Calas, 160. — Témoignage inadmissible, 161.
- Huc (M. —) erreurs de, 86, 92, 304. — Nie la mélancolie de Marc-Antoine, 52. — Son écrit, 312.
- Hunaud (la sœur d' —), 286 — ses lettres, 385, 392.
- Infernet (l'), cachot au Capitole de Toulouse, 27.
- Innocent III et l'inquisition de Toulouse, 8.
- Inquisition (l'—) créée à Toulouse, 8.
- Interlocutoire (arrêt), 128.
- Jal (M. —), 163.
- Jérôme (Saint), 3, 4.
- Jouve, avocat, 240.
- La Beaumelle fait le portrait de David de Beaudrigue, 330. — Insulté par ce capitoul, 32. — Premier auteur de l'écrit intitulé la *Calomnie confondue*, 175. — Ses papiers, 183. — Son Mémoire inédit, cité, 59, 259, 260. — Son *Préservatif contre le Déisme*, 176. — Son placet pour les Dlls Calas 288, 372.
- La Broue (F.-G. de), critique la *Calomnie confondue*, 178.
- Lacombe (Dict. canonique), 93.
- La Cour, pénitent blanc, 109.
- Laffitteau, trésorier des pénitents blancs, sa réponse à une sommation de Louis, 107, de Mme Calas, 108.
- Lafosse, médecin, 450.
- Lagane, procureur du roi. — Appelle *a minima* de l'arrêt des Capitouls, 128. — Consulte un dominicain sur le secret de la confession, 156. — Est l'auteur du Monitoire, 95. — Inflexible quant à la mise aux fers de Lavaysse, 128. — Requiert l'inhumation de Marc-Antoine, 104. — Son caractère, 433. — Son réquisitoire, 125. — Sur le Capitoulat, 34.
- Lagrèze, témoin, 102.
- Lamarque, chirurgien, 28, 117, 118. — Sa lettre, 144. — Son rapport, 342.
- Lambrigit soldat, témoin, 145.
- Lamoignon (le chancelier de —) — Lettre à Saint-Priest sur la *Calomnie confondue*, 184, 316, 354.
- La Pivardière (M. de), son procès célèbre, 115, 445.
- Laplaigne, 156.
- La Poype de Vertrieu, évêque de Poitiers, cité 182.
- La Salle (de —), conseiller au parlement de Toulouse, son factum cité 23, 111, 134, 137, etc. — Défend les Calas dans le monde, 133. — Se récuse, 134.
- Latour (A.-Th.), 510.
- Latour, médecin, 28, 89, 117.
- Lavaur (Concile de), 6.
- Lavaysse (David) père. — Factum terminé par son second fils, 136. — Fait biffer l'écrou de Gaubert, 258. — Sa démarche auprès de son fils en prison, 119 — Se laisse persuader que les

- Calas sont coupables, 119. — Son caractère, 70. — Son éloge par Dom Vayssette, 69. — Son Mémoire inédit, 123. — Sur la prise à partie, 259. — Sur le mariage de Nanette, 292. — Voltaire le presse d'agir, 227.
- Lavaysse (A.F.G.), 21, 25, 69. — Accusé d'approuver toute espèce de meurtre, 99. — Conduit Mme Calas à Ferney, 272. — Confie des lettres à David, 118. — Cru le *sacrificateur de sa religion*, 72, 101. — Découvre avec Pierre le cadavre, 78. — Écrit un second factum, 249. — Est acquitté, 217. — Est invité à souper chez les Calas, 72. — Il abjure, 205. — Meurt à Lorient, 279. — Nombreux certificats en sa faveur, 70. — Pourquoi il entre dans la boutique des Calas, 72. — Pourquoi on se garda de l'absoudre, 118. — Rentre à trois reprises dans la maison, 73. — Répète le mensonge convenu, 80. — Reste à Paris, 271. — Sa famille, 69, 136, 439. Sa prison, 83. — Ses études commerciales à Bordeaux, 70. — Ses factums, 136, 249, S'établit en Angleterre, 279. — Son âge, 69. — Son arrivée à Toulouse, 71. — Son élargissement, 209. — Son épée, 69, 101, 140. — Son projet d'établissement à Saint-Domingue, 70. — Son respect pour Mme Calas, 42. — Un soldat vient lui dire que Calas est exécuté, lui et les autres accusés condamnés à mort, 204. — Veut empêcher Mme Calas de voir le cadavre, 75. — Vient secrètement à Paris, 227. — Visite de Voltaire à Ferney, 272.
- Lavaysse de Vidou (Étienne) achève le factum de son père, 136. — Touchante histoire de sa femme, 439.
- Laverdy, contrôleur général, 228, 262, 365.
- Laya (J. L.) — *Jean Calas*, tragédie, 298.
- Le Blanc du Vernet d'Hackluya, *Guide dans Toulouse*, 315.
- Lemierre d'Argy — *Calas ou le fanatisme*, 298.
- Lezat (Toinette), faux témoin, 150.
- Lisle-Bribes, Capitoul, veut calmer David, 27.
- Loménie de Brienne, archevêque de Toulouse, 93.
- Louis, chirurgien célèbre. — Son mémoire lu devant l'Académie de chirurgie, 143.
- Louis Calas accusé d'avoir trahi ses sœurs, 283. — Accusé, sans doute à tort, par Court de Gebelin, 55. — Avoue ses torts publiquement, 58, 59, 61. — Barrère le déclare bon Jacobin, 277. — Coupable du retard des pièces, 246. — Était pénitent blanc, 106. — Faible protestation contre les obsèques faites à Marc-Antoine, 107. — Fait contraindre son père à lui donner plus qu'à ses frères, 62. — Faux bruits à son sujet, 111. — La sœur Fraisse se défait de lui, 54 et 246. — Paraît à la barre de l'Assemblée législative, 276. — Refuse une place à Nîmes, 60. — Sa conversion au catholicisme, 45, 58. — Sa cupidité, 58, 64. — Sa lettre signée par sœurs, 277. — Se fait faire une part sur le don royal, 262. — Se rend à Paris, 246. — Ses deux factums, 55. — Ses parents calomniés à son sujet, 62, 147. — Ses placets à l'Intendant contre sa famille, 59. — Ses prétentions, 56. — Son caractère, 54. — Son costume pareil à celui de Marc-Antoine, 56. — Veut continuer les affaires de son père, 162. — Vient remercier la Convention, 277.
- Louis XV. — Don royal aux Calas, 255. — Le mot qu'on lui prête n'est pas de lui, 241. — Son indifférence égoïste, *ib.*
- Louis (saint) protège l'Inquisition à Toulouse, 8.
- Loyseau de Mauléon, son factum, 235.
- Luther, accusé d'ordonner le parricide, 182. — Paroles violentes mais falsifiées par l'abbé de Cantezat, *ib.* — Paroles tout opposées du même, *ib.*
- Luzac (L.-G.), IX.
- Magi (l'abbé), 308.
- Maison de Calas, 20, 429.
- Maistre (Joseph de), doute de l'innocence des Calas, 298, cité 189.
- Maîtres des requêtes (les), 247, 251, 366. — Demandent la suppression de la procession du 17 mai, 256. — Leur lettre à Maupeou, 254.
- Marc-Antoine Calas. — Actes nombreux de protestantisme, 143. — Comment il se tua, 67. — Considéré comme un martyr et un saint, 111. — Discussion sur ses cravates, 304. — Examiné par les chirurgiens, 28. — Fort rêveur le 13 octobre, 74 et 124. — Joue *Polyeucte*, 50 (conséquences qu'on tire de son jeu, 51). — M. Delamote essaye sans succès de le convertir, 166. — N'avait jamais voulu abjurer, 153-168. — Ne peut être reçu avocat faute d'acte de catholicité, 47. — Ré-

- pète des fragments de *Hamlet* et du *Sidney* de Gresset, 51. — Sa colère contre Louis devenu catholique, 49, 63. — Sa mélancolie, 53; niée par M. Huc, 52; affirmée dans le *Monitoire*, *ib.*; par Pierre, *ib.*; par Lavaysse père, 124. — Sa réponse à Viguière, 52, 75. — Sa répugnance pour le commerce, 48. — Ses fautes, *ib.* — Ses funérailles, 105-111. — Ses parents calomniés à son sujet, 152. — Ses lectures, 50. — Ses prétentions, 50. — Son âge et son caractère, 46. — Son corps porté au Capitole, 27. — Son costume pareil à celui de Louis, 56. — Son entretien avec Challier, 53, 165, 166. — Son idée de se faire pasteur, 165, 166. — Son intolérance, 49. — *Traité très-tendrement* par son père, 40. — Trouvé sans vie au milieu de sa famille, 21. — Vu dans les églises catholiques, 159-162.
- Marie Leczynska (la reine), 242, 254.
- Mariette, avocat célèbre, se charge de la cause, 226. — Ses factums, 235, 249.
- Marron (le pasteur), III, 240.
- Mary Lafon (M.), contre les Calas, 363.
- Massaleng, veuve, témoin, 155.
- Mathey, témoin, 152.
- Maupeou, accueil qu'il fait à Mme Calas, 240, 256. — Mande Mme Calas, 255. — Sa réponse aux maîtres des requêtes, 255, 263.
- Maurepas (comte de), ministre, 263. — Sa lettre à Mme Calas, 368.
- Mercadier, Dlle, et deux autres témoins, 146.
- Meynier (M. Ch.), IX.
- Micault de Souleville (le père), témoin, 140.
- Michelet (M. —), 333.
- Midi de la France, foyer d'hérésie, 3.
- Mignot (l'abbé), neveu de Voltaire. — Mme Calas lui est adressée, 235. — Porte à Sellières le corps de son oncle, 275.
- Mirepoix, témoin, 50.
- Monitoire. — Appel des Calas contre le, 129. — Ce que c'était, 89. — *Fulminé*, 95. — Illégalité du Monitoire, 92, 96. — Ne pouvait désigner les personnes, 93. — Nombreuses publications et fulminations du Monitoire, 95, 97, 130. — Personne n'ose soutenir l'appel, 129. — Sanctionné après coup par l'official, 130. — Texte du Monitoire contre les Calas, 94.
- Montbel (Mme de), supérieure de Saint-Pantaléon, 310.
- Montesquieu, témoin, 166.
- Montesquieu, cité, 90.
- Montfort (Simon de), 6.
- Montluc, 11.
- Montpellier (le présidial de), fait saisir les mémoires des avocats, 236.
- Monyer, assesseur des Capitouls, 22. — Calomnié et poursuivi comme favorable aux Calas, mais disculpé par un arrêt, 120.
- Moquin-Tandon (M.), XVI, 470.
- Morand (Pierre), bourgeois hérétique, 5.
- Morlhon (B. de —), 511.
- Moultou (Paul), correspondant et ami de Voltaire, 217, 219, 235.
- Nanette (Anne Calas), plus tard Mme Duvoisin, 66. — Calomniée indignement à Toulouse, 292. — Écrit à Griollet, 282. — Enlevée de nuit par la maréchassée et enfermée à la Visitation, 283. — Est bien traitée à la Visitation, 286. — Libérée et envoyée à Paris chez la dame Dumas, 288, 290. — Mort de son mari, 294. — Porte au président d'Auriac la lettre de la sœur Fraisse, 288. — Sa mort, 295. — S'enfuit à Mautauban avec sa sœur après l'exécution de son père, 282. — Ses enfants, 293. — Son mariage, 291. — Son portrait par Grimm et par la sœur Fraisse, 66.
- Nautonnier (Mlle de), 385, 471.
- Niquet (le Président), 448.
- Ordonnance criminelle de 1670, 27, 28, 93, 114, 115, 116, 127, 170.
- Pagès, témoin, 145.
- Parlement de Toulouse. — Assemblée secrète, 257. — Casse l'arrêt des Capitouls, 128. — Sa colère, 242. — Sa précipitation, 129. — Sa réponse à l'arrêt du grand conseil 242. — Ses excès de pouvoir contre le duc de Fitzjames, 131.
- Pénitents (confréries des), inventées à Toulouse, 7.
- Pénitents blancs (archiconfrérie des), au convoi de Marc-Antoine, 105. — Célébrent pour lui un service fastueux, 106. — Les pénitents et Mme Calas, 108. — Leur lutte contre les Calas, 110. — Leur suppression en 1792, 111. — Prétexte de la cérémonie célébrée en l'honneur de Marc-Antoine, 106. — Voltaire (sur les), 110.
- Pérès (Jean), faux témoin, 149.
- Petit (Jeanneton), histoire controuvée de, 149.
- Peyronnet, chirurgien, 28.
- Pfeffel, 479.



Philippe Auguste, 6, 18.

Philippe le Bel, 9.

Pie IV, 12.

Pièges tendus aux accusés dans les interrogatoires, 98.

Pierre Calas abjure, 205, — arrive à Genève, 229. — Condamné au bannissement à vie *pour les cas résultant du procès*, 207. — Considéré comme l'assassin par David, 53. — Convient naïvement de sa médiocrité d'esprit et de caractère, 54. — Demeure incarcéré dans un couvent 209. — Ferme la porte de la maison en rentrant pour souper, 77. — Interrogé longuement par Voltaire, 230. — Laisse une chandelle allumée dans la maison, 25. — Pierre et Lavaysse découvrent le cadavre, leurs cris, 78. — Pierre perd la tête, 79. — Pourquoi le rapporteur conclut aux galères contre lui, 207. — Propos qu'on lui avait prêté, 206. — Sa lettre au P. Bourges, 209. — Sa mort, 276. — S'évade du couvent quatre mois après son incarcération, 209. — Son établissement de commerce, 271 et 467. — Son mariage, 272

Plan de ce livre, 431.

Planet (Demoiselle), témoin, 156.

Platte, témoin, 160.

Plougoulm, vi, 319.

Poirson (lettre de), 198, 199, 210.

Polenz (G. von —), cité, 321.

Pompadour (Mme de —), 221.

Pongerville, 298.

Popis, témoin, 138.

Pouchelon (Dlle). témoin, nie avoir dit ce qu'on lui prête, 139, 145.

Poyet (le chancelier —), 114, 444.

Praslin (duc de —), 231, — accueil qu'il fait à Mme Calas, 240.

Prêtres et moines tous érigés en juges d'instruction, 92. — Aucun ne peut affirmer que Marc-Antoine voulût abjurer, 155.

Preuves (classifications des —), 169.

Prévost-Paradol, 332.

Prise à partie projetée des Capitouls et du Parlement, 251, 257, 259.

Privat (feu M. —), ix.

Procession du 17 mai, 12, 15, 256.

Protestants accusés d'assassiner leurs enfants catholiques, 101, — par l'abbé de Contezat dans une brochure, 186, — par l'abbé Dugué, 97, 347, — par la rumeur populaire, 23, — par le clergé dans le Monitoire, 101, — par le président Du Puget, 26, 173, — par M. Debru, 148. — Animosité contre les —, 147.

— Conséquences qu'on tire du préjugé répandu sur les protestants, 172. — Droits des enfants protestants contre leur père, 57. — Émigration à Nîmes et hors du royaume, 211. — Juste indignation que leur cause le Monitoire en France et à l'étranger, 101, 176. — Leur joie à la nouvelle de la réhabilitation, 262. — Leur reconnaissance envers Voltaire, 262. — Ne pouvaient avoir de domestiques protestants, 44. — Professions qui leur étaient interdites, 48. — Quelques-uns croient au crime des Calas, 235. — Terreur que cause parmi eux le supplice de Calas, 231.

Pujoux. — *La veuve Calas à Paris*, 298.

Rabaut (Paul — xiii) dénoncé à Saint-Priest par Lamoignon qui désire qu'on ne sévisse pas, 316, 354. — *La Calomnie confondue*, 175. — La vivacité de cet écrit est blâmée par les collègues de —, 178. — Remet un placet à M. de Paulmy, 356. — Sa lettre à Bonrepos, 187. — Son admirable *Mémoire* justificatif, 186. — Son portrait par Saint-Priest adressé à Lamoignon, 356.

Rabelais, cité, 10.

Raymond V, 5.

Raymond VI, 6.

Raymond VII, 6, 9.

Read (M. —), vii.

*Recolement*, 114.

Regnier (l'abbé —) félicite Mme Calas, 241.

Réhabilitation, 251.

*Reprocher* un témoin, 114.

*Requête*, ne peut être présentée, pourquoi, 120. — Pour récuser David et Chirac, 120.

Résumé des témoignages devant les Capitouls et le Parlement, 168.

*Retentum*, 199.

Ribotte-Charron, 218, 455.

Richelieu (le maréchal duc de —) écrit au sujet des Calas à Voltaire, 220. — Voltaire lui présente Pierre, 232.

Rochechouart (Cte de —), cité 113, — écrit à Saint-Florentin, 123, 352.

Rochette, dernier pasteur martyr, 15, 16, 53, 179, 185.

Rose Calas, 65. — Enfermée au couvent de N.-D. de la rue du Sac, 285. — Se trouve mal à Versailles, 241.

Rougemont, 466.

Rougian, huissier, témoin, 107.

Rousseau (J. J.) rend hommage à Calas, 235.

- Rousseau (Pierre) agit pour les Calas, 510.
- Roux J. P., pasteur, — sa lettre à Mme Calas, 253.
- Roux G. A., témoin, nie les propos qu'on lui prête, 146.
- Saint-Florentin, ministre secrétaire d'État, blâme l'archevêque, 244. — Constate la pauvreté de Calas, 165. — Destitue David de Beaudrigue, 33. — Fait comprendre Louis dans la répartition du don royal, 262. — Lettre à M. de Gudane, 171. — A Laverdy, 262. — N'ose toucher à la personne de Paul Rabaut, 184, 355. — Regrette l'interruption des dragonnades, 263. — Sa colère de la réhabilitation des Calas, 262. — Sa lettre à M. d'Estissac, 290. — Sa réponse au duc de Villars, 229. — Ses lettres à David de Baudrigue, 31, 32, 348. — A M. de Fitz-James, 364. — A M. de Praslin, 473, 474. — Son caractère, 31, 432. — Toujours hostile aux Calas et aux protestants, 228. — Trompe Voltaire sur ses sentiments, *ib.*
- Saint-James Chronicle* (The—), 233.
- Saint-Priest, intendant du Languedoc, VII. — Ses lettres à Saint-Florentin, 345. — A Lamoignon, 355.
- Saladin (Simon —) dément les accusations qu'on lui prête, 147.
- Salvan (M. l'abbé —). *Histoire du procès de Jean Calas à Toulouse*, XVI, 16, 42, 43, 47, 53, 62, 71, 72, 110, 126, 252, 258, 280, 309, 311, 312, 322 à 331, 378, 380, 452.
- Savanier, greffier, 22, 82, 282.
- Secret de la procédure criminelle (par inquisition), avait passé des tribunaux ecclésiastiques à tous, 114 et 443. — Recommandé par Boniface VIII, 443.
- Secret du jugement, 225, 226.
- Sellette (interrogatoire sur la —), 115.
- Senaux, président au Parlement. — Assiste à une entrevue des deux Lavaysse, 110. — Épigramme contre lui, 447. — Sa cupidité, 448. — Ses lettres à Saint-Florentin, 84, 87, 344, 357.
- Sénovert, beau-frère de Lavaysse, 209.
- Serres (Matthieu), procureur au parlement, 258.
- Sérénus, évêque de Marseille, brise les images, 5.
- Serments très-fréquents exigés des accusés, 46.
- Singulier* (témoin —), ce qu'on appelait ainsi, 169.
- Sol (le docteur —), 210, 453.
- Soldats de garde. — Leurs témoignages, 105, 145.
- Souhert, maçon, 465.
- Sudre, avocat, 120. — Ce qu'il perdit à se montrer plein de hardiesse, 135. — Ne put jamais communiquer avec les accusés, 173. — Provoque à Genève une déclaration contre la calomnie toulousaine, 173. — Refus de l'admettre à prouver des faits favorables aux accusés, 39, 65, 141, 150. — Ses trois factums, 146. — Son courage, 135. — Son éloge par Furgole, 449. — Sur le mensonge des Calas, 81.
- Teissier, la famille. — Amis des Calas — Séjour des D<sup>l</sup>es Calas chez eux; prétendu indice contre les Calas, 65.
- Témoignages. — Principes étranges de l'ancienne jurisprudence à leur sujet, 90.
- Témoins à décharge écartés, 91.
- Ténery, témoin, 164.
- Théâtre (pièces de —), sur l'affaire Calas, 299 301. — Représentations, 276, 295, 301.
- Thierry (Augustin), 3.
- Toulouse. — Coup d'œil sur l'histoire religieuse de, 1 à 17. — Croisade contre —, 5 à 7. — Crypte de Saint-Sernin, 12. — Dite *Cité Palladienne*, la *Rome de la Garonne*, 3. — Donnée par le Pape à Simon de Montfort, 6. — Fête de la Délivrance, 12, 13. — Ignoble sculpture à Saint-Sernin, 13. — Inquisition née à Toulouse, 8. — Insultée par le Concile de Lavaur, 6. — Longtemps foyer d'hérésie, 3 à 11. — Massacre de 1562, 10. — Peintures de Rivals au Capitole, 13. — Procès (trois) pour cause de religion, en 1762, 15. — Quartiers de la Dolbade et de la Daurade préférés par les protestants, 24.
- Tournelle (la —). Ce que c'était, 447. Noms des membres, 448. — Plusieurs eussent dû se récuser, 449. — Deux juges demandent la vérification d'un fait mais en vain, 90. — Un seul opine pour l'acquittement, *ib.* — Sentence des autres accusés, 207. — Épigramme contre les juges, 208. — Absurdité de la sentence, 207. — Sentie par les juges, 208.
- Végobre (de —), 217, 218, 455.
- Vergès, témoin, 99.
- Versailles. — Scène dans la grande galerie des glaces, 240.
- Vigilance, 3.
- Viguière (Jeanne ou Jeannette Viguière),



- servante des Calas, 21, 44. — Certificat de son confesseur, 269. — Convertit Louis au catholicisme, 45. — Est acquittée à l'unanimité, 207. — Extraits de ses interrogatoires et confrontations, 148, 151, 153, etc. — Fervente catholique, 45. — Nouvelles calomnies contre elle, 269. — Pourquoi on se garda de l'absoudre, 118. — Sa déclaration juridique, 269. — Son admirable fidélité, 45, 46. — Séparée de Mme Calas, 223. — Son testament, 255. — Soupçonnée à tort d'avoir voulu s'empoisonner, 189. — Vient à Paris après la cassation de l'arrêt de Calas, 124. — Voltaire veut la faire interroger à Ferney, 223.
- Villars (— le duc de —), 221. — Froide lettre à Saint-Florentin, 228. — Voit Pierre et Donat, 232.
- Villemain (M. —), 5.
- Villemain d'Abancourt. — *La bienfaisance de Voltaire*, 298.
- Voltaire (anecdote sur) — 237. — Apprend d'Audibert le supplice de Calas, 213. — Conseil sur la prise à partie, 262, — contre les jugements non motivés, 259. — Corrige le factum d'Elie de Beaumont, 234. — Écrit à Audibert, 230. — A d'Aguesseau, 231. — A d'Alembert, 214, 233, 248. — A Bernis, 214, 220. — A Damilaville, 215, 219, 230, 244, 246, 248, 256, 260, 262, 456, 463, etc. — A d'Argence de Dirac, 261, 289, — A d'Argental, 220, 221, 224, 225, 227, 228, 230, 236, 248, 259, 266, 289, 463, etc. — A Debrus, 259, 260, 261, — A Élie de Beaumont, 234, 245, 286, — A l'abbé Audra, 238. — A La Michodière, 231. — A Lavaysse père, 227. — A M. de Crosne, 223, 230, 237, 244. — A Mlles Calas, 289, — A Mme Calas sur l'arrêt de révision, 253. — A Mme du Deffand, 238. — A Ribotte, 271, etc. — A Pierre Rousseau, 233, — A Vernes, 245, — Au docteur Tronchin, 231, 252. — Essaye d'excuser les juges de Calas, 238. — Essaye en vain d'obtenir à Mme Calas une audience de Saint-Florentin, 228. — Fait venir Donat, 215 et l'étudie, 216. — Feint de croire les Calas coupables, 218. — Félicite Mme Calas, 245. — Il enrôle pour les Calas la duchesse d'Anville, 221, — la duchesse de la Roche-Guyon, 233, — le duc de Choiseul, 221, — le duc d'Harcourt, 233, — le duc de Villars, 228, — le maréchal de Richelieu, 220, 232, — le marquis d'Argence de Dirac, 233, 261, — le premier président de Nicolai, 221, — les Tronchin, 217, 221, — Mme [de Pompadour, 221, — MM. d'Auriac, de Chaban, de Chazelles, de la Marche, Ménard, 221, — trois des ministres, 231. — Jugement sur Voltaire, XII. — Justifie le mensonge de Calas, 81. — Le nom des Calas dans les ovations qu'il reçoit, 272. — *Lettres inédites* sur la tolérance, 217. — Loue Élie de Beaumont, 234, 249. — Loue le deuxième factum de Lavaysse, 249. — On répand le bruit qu'il a reconnu la culpabilité des Calas, 273. — Qualifie durement Bonrepos, 447. — Ravi de la lettre de la sœur Fraisse, 288. — Reçoit l'estampe avec enthousiasme, en écrit à Mme Calas, veut y ajouter la figure de Donat, 463. — Retarde la publication de son *Traité de la Tolérance et des Toulousaines* de Gêbelin, 245. — Sa joie à la nouvelle de la réhabilitation, 252. — Sa joie de la délivrance de Nanette, 289. — Sa statue, XIX. — Sa susceptibilité au sujet des Calas, 237. — S'élève contre le fractionnement des preuves légales, 170. Ses doubles funérailles, 275. — Ses lettres à Mme Calas sur le mariage de Nanette, 292. — Sur la naissance d'un petit-fils, 293. — A Mme Duvoisin, 289, — S'indigne de la saisie des factums, 236. — Des crimes commis au nom de Dieu, 214. — Des frais d'envoi des procédures, 243, 246. — S'inquiète de la pauvreté des acquittés, 254. — Son opinion sur Mme Calas, 42. — Sur l'émigration des protestants, à M. de Choiseul, 211.
- Westminster Review* (the), ses reproches aux protestants, 178.
- Young (Arthur). — Sur le costume en France, 56.

# TABLE DES MATIÈRES.

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	Pages
PRÉFACE.....	I
AVERTISSEMENT SUR CETTE ÉDITION.....	II
INTRODUCTION. <i>Coup d'œil sur l'histoire religieuse de Toulouse....</i>	1
CHAPITRES.	
I <sup>er</sup> . <i>L'arrestation.....</i>	19
II. <i>David de Beaudrigue et le Capitoulat.....</i>	29
III. <i>La famille Calas.....</i>	38
IV. <i>Les faits. — Arrivée de Lavaysse. — Récit de Mme Calas. — Mensonge des accusés. — Lettre de M<sup>e</sup> Carrière... ,.</i>	66
V. <i>Intervention ecclésiastique. — Le Monitoire. — Funé- railles de Marc-Antoine. — Les Pénitents blancs.....</i>	90
VI. <i>Procédure et arrêt des Capitouls. — Information secrète. — Briefs intendits.—Faits justificatifs.—Autopsie du ca- davre.—Pièges tendus à Lavaysse.—Affaire de M<sup>e</sup> Mon- nier. —Affaire d'Espailac.—Sentence des Capitouls.— Double appel des condamnés et du ministère public..</i>	113
VII. <i>Les Calas devant le Parlement. — Excès de pouvoir de cette cour.—Mémoires de Sudre, de Gaubert, et de David Lavaysse. — Discussion des témoignages. — Les cris entendus le 13 octobre.—Marc-Antoine Calas a-t-il pu se tuer? — Est-il mort assassiné? — Était-il devenu catholique? — Témoignage sur ouï-dire, ou absurdes, ou volontairement faux.....</i>	131
VIII. <i>Paul Rabaut et les Protestants de France. — Le pro- testantisme religion de parricides. — Déclaration de</i>	

	Genève. — <i>La calomnie confondue</i> . — La Beaumelle et Paul Rabaut. — Réponse de l'abbé de Contezat. — Luther et Calvin cités comme ordonnant le parricide. — Noble réplique de Rabaut. — Son écrit brûlé par le bourreau.....	171
IX.	<i>Torture et supplice de Jean Calas</i> .....	189
X.	<i>Voltaire</i> .....	213
XI.	<i>Révision du procès et réhabilitation des condamnés</i> .....	238
XII.	<i>Derniers événements</i> . — Pauvreté de Mme Calas. — L'estampe. — Nouvelle calomnie et réponse de Viguière. — Mme Calas à Ferney. — Obsèques de Voltaire au Panthéon. — Louis et ses sœurs devant la Convention. — Fin de Mme Calas, de ses fils, de Lavaysse et de David ...	265
XIII.	<i>Nanette Calas</i> .....	281
XIV.	<i>Histoire de l'opinion en France au sujet des Calas</i> , I. 1762 à 1858.....	297
	II. 1858 à 1869.....	322

## PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES.

I.	Domerc, secrétaire du subdélégué Amblard à M. de Saint-Priest, intendant du Languedoc (p. 20, 316)....	337
II.	Verbal de David de Beaudrigue. (p. 26, 49).....	338
III.	Le capitoul David à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 31).....	340
IV.	Relations des chirurgiens et médecin (p. 28, 117).....	341
V.	Le président du Senaux à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 84, 87).	344
VI.	M. de Saint-Priest au même (p. 318).....	345
VII.	Le subdélégué Amblard à M. de Saint-Priest (p. 316)...	346
VIII.	Déposition de M. l'abbé Dugué, hebdomadier de Saint-Étienne (p. 98, 316).....	347
IX.	Le subdélégué Amblard à M. de Saint-Priest (p. 316)....	348
X.	M. de Saint-Florentin au Capitoul David (p. 31, 228)....	348
XI.	Le même au président de Senaux (p. 228).....	349
XII.	Extrait d'un Brief Intendit (p. 116).....	349
XIII.	Le capitoul David à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 31).....	351
XIV.	Le comte de Rochecouart au même (p. 123).....	352
XV.	Le capitoul David au même (p. 31).....	352
XVI.	M. de Saint-Florentin à M. de Rochecouart (p. 228)...	353
XVII.	Le chancelier de Lamoignon à M. de Saint-Priest (p. 316, 184).....	354

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES.

525

XVIII.	M. de Saint-Florentin à M. de Bonrepos proc. général (p. 184, 228).....	355
XIX.	M. de Saint-Priest au chancelier Lamoignon (p. 316, 184).....	355
XX.	Le président de Senaux à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 448).	357
XXI.	Le capitoul David à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 31, 34)..	357
XXII.	Le président du Puget au même (p. 26, 172).....	358
XXIII.	M. de Saint-Florentin au président du Puget (p. 228....	359
XXIV.	Le capitoul David à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 31).....	359
XXV.	Le président du Puget au même (p. 283).....	360
XXVI.	M. de Saint-Florentin à M. de Bonrepos (p. 228).....	362
XXVII.	Le même au même (p. 223, 228).....	362
XXVIII.	Voltaire à M. de Saint-Florentin (p. 228).....	363
XXIX.	M. de Saint-Florentin au duc de Fitz-James (p. 228)...	364
XXX.	M. de Saint-Florentin à M. de Saint-Priest (p. 228).....	364
XXXI.	Le même à M. de Laverdy, contrôleur général (p. 228, 262).....	365
XXXII.	Jugement de réhabilitation (p. 251).....	366
XXXIII.	M. de Maurepas à Mme Calas (p. 263).....	368
XXXIV.	Mme Calas à la Beaumelle (p. 76).....	369
XXXV.	Mme Calas à Voltaire (p. 272).....	370
XXXVI.	Lavaysse au même (p. 272).....	370
XXXVII.	Voltaire à Mme Calas (p. 272).....	371
XXXVIII.	Sépulture de Mme Calas (p. 44).....	371
XXXIX.	Placet pour les demoiselles Calas (p. 288).....	372

## LETTRES DE LA SŒUR A.-J. FRAISSE.

AVERTISSEMENT.....	377
LETTRES .....	381

## NOTES.

1.	La maison des Calas (p. 20).....	429
2.	Sur le plan de ce livre (p. 28).....	431
3.	Coras (p. 29).....	431
4.	Saint-Florentin (p. 31).....	432
5.	David de Beaudrigue (p. 33).....	432
6.	Lagane (p. 34).....	433

7.	Les archives du Capitole (p. 37).....	434
8.	Métiers et professions interdits aux Protestants (p. 48)..	435
9.	Delamote (p. 59).....	436
10.	Famille Lavaysse (p. 69, 136).....	439
11.	Carrière (p. 83).....	441
12.	Procédure secrète (p. 114).....	443
13.	Le chancelier Poyet (p. 114).....	444
14.	M. de la Pivardière (p. 115).....	444
15.	Les juges des Calas au Parlement (p. 131).....	445
16.	Sudre (p. 134).....	449
17.	Opinion de deux médecins (p. 143).....	450
18.	La place Saint-Georges (p. 191).....	451
19.	La torture et la roue (p. 191, 196).....	451
20.	Le docteur Sol et sa famille (p. 210).....	453
21.	De Végobre (p. 218).....	455
22.	Ribotte-Charon (p. 218).....	455
23.	Elie de Beaumont (p. 229).....	456
24.	La duchesse d'Anville (p. 232).....	456
25.	Diderot (p. 235).....	457
26.	L'abbé Audra (p. 238).....	458
27.	Situation financière de Mme Calas (p. 268).....	459
28.	L'Estampe (p. 268).....	461
29.	Affaires commerciales de Pierre et de Donat (p. 271)....	467
30.	La postérité de Pierre Calas (p. 276).....	469
31.	Anecdote sur David (p. 279).....	470
32.	Mademoiselle de Nautonnier (p. 385) .....	471
33.	Le pasteur Duvoisin (p. 291).....	472
34.	Marthe Camp, vicomtesse de Bombelles (p. 293).....	478
35.	Alexandre Duvoisin-Calas (p. 293).....	479

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE.

I.	Avant le supplice de Jean Calas .....	483
II.	Du supplice de Calas à l'arrêt du Conseil.....	486
III.	De l'arrêt du Conseil à la fin du dix-huitième siècle.....	489
IV.	Pièces de vers.....	494
V.	Théâtre.....	495
VI.	Dix-neuvième siècle .....	497
VII.	Angleterre.....	499
VIII.	Allemagne.....	501

	<b>TABLE DES MATIÈRES.</b>	<b>527</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Hollande.....</b>	<b>502</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>Estampes.....</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Journaux et Recueils divers.....</b>	<b>509</b>
<b>XII.</b>	<b>Desiderata.....</b>	<b>511</b>
	<b>TABLE ANALYTIQUE.....</b>	<b>513</b>

**FIN DE LA TABLE DES MATIÈRES.**















